LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連れ狼

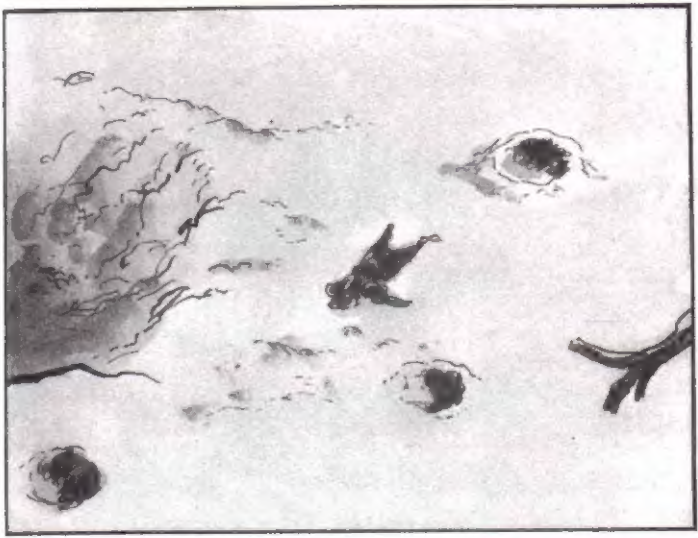
VOLUME 28

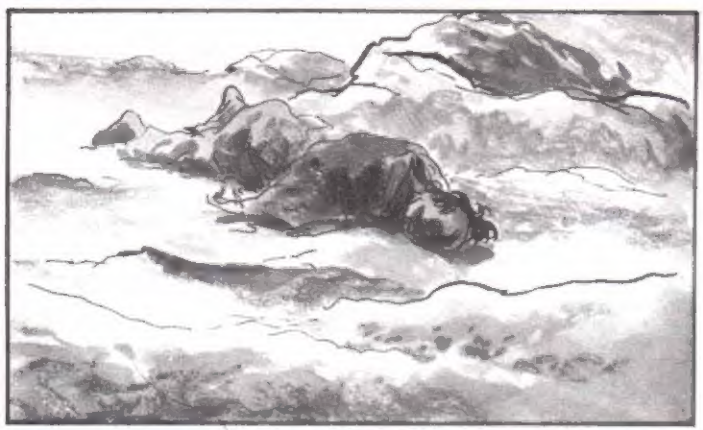
THE LOTUS THRONE

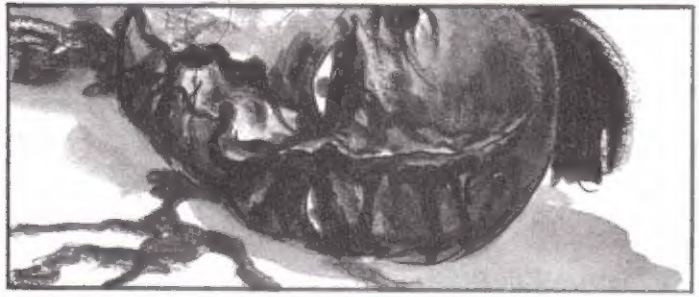
By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

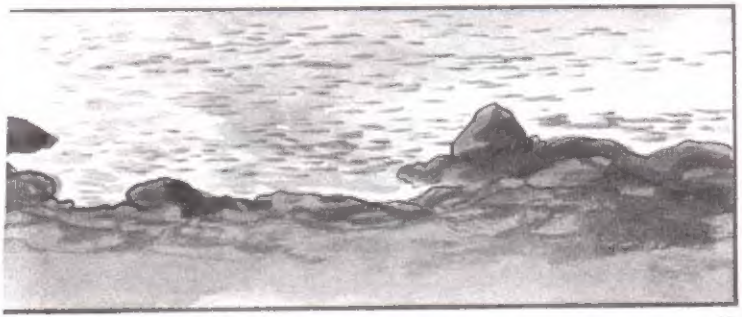
the hundred and thirty-eighth

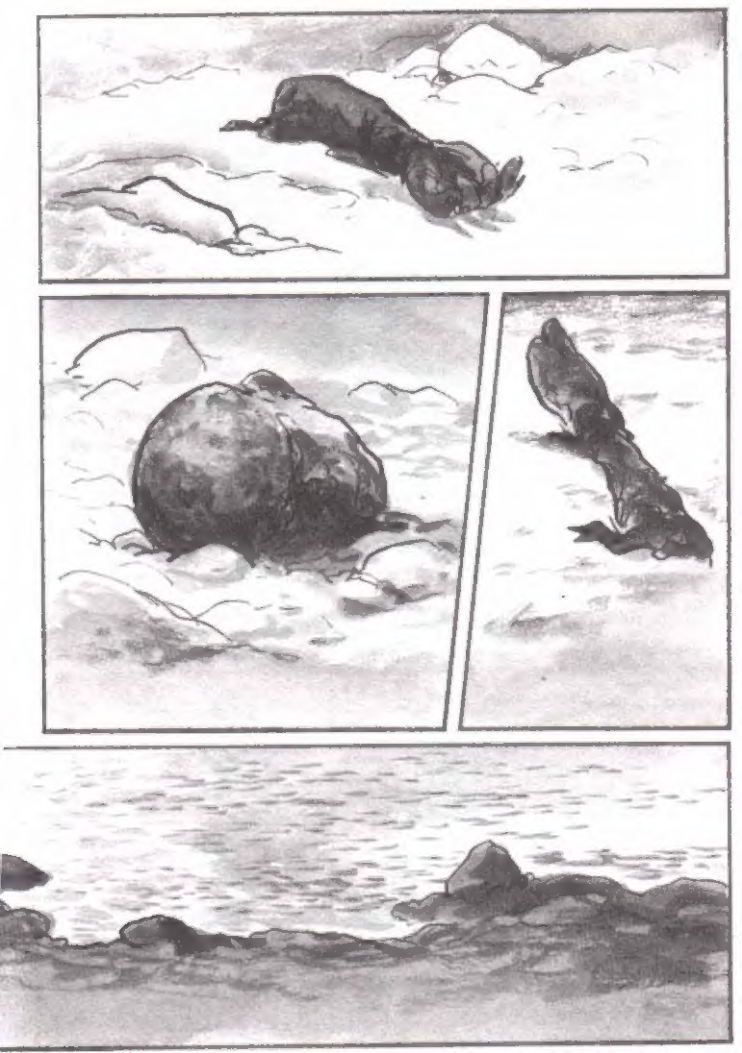
Corpse Tree







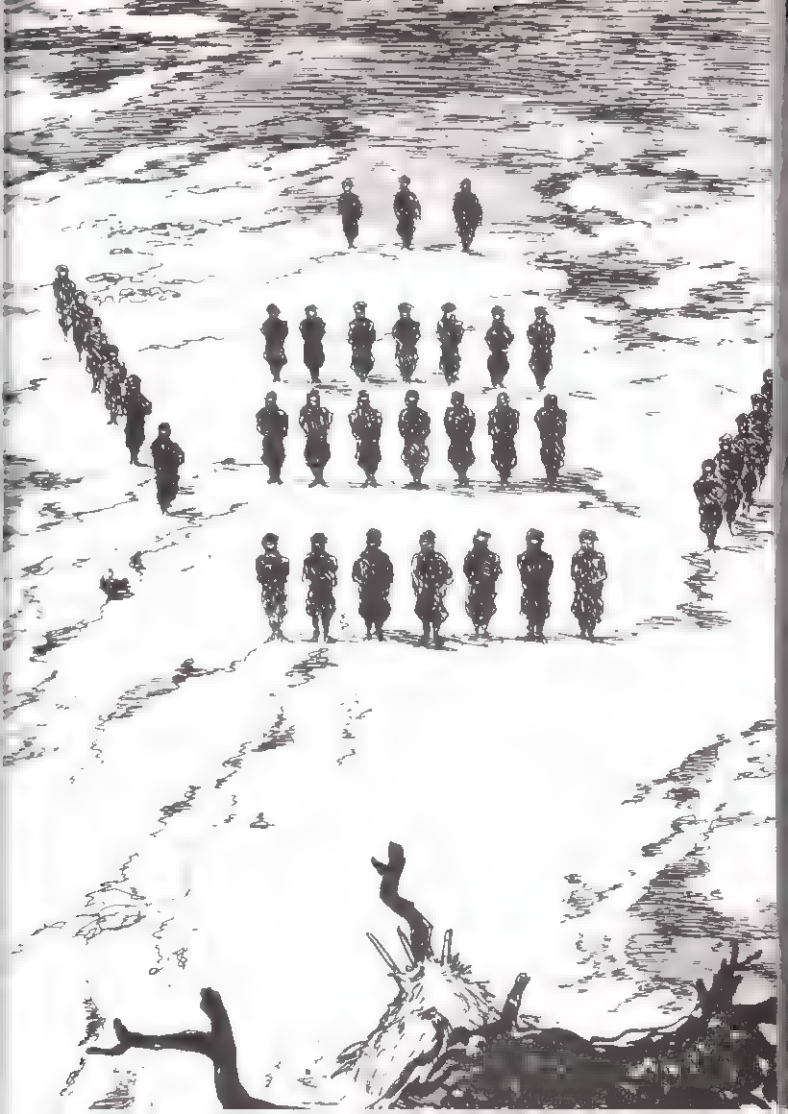


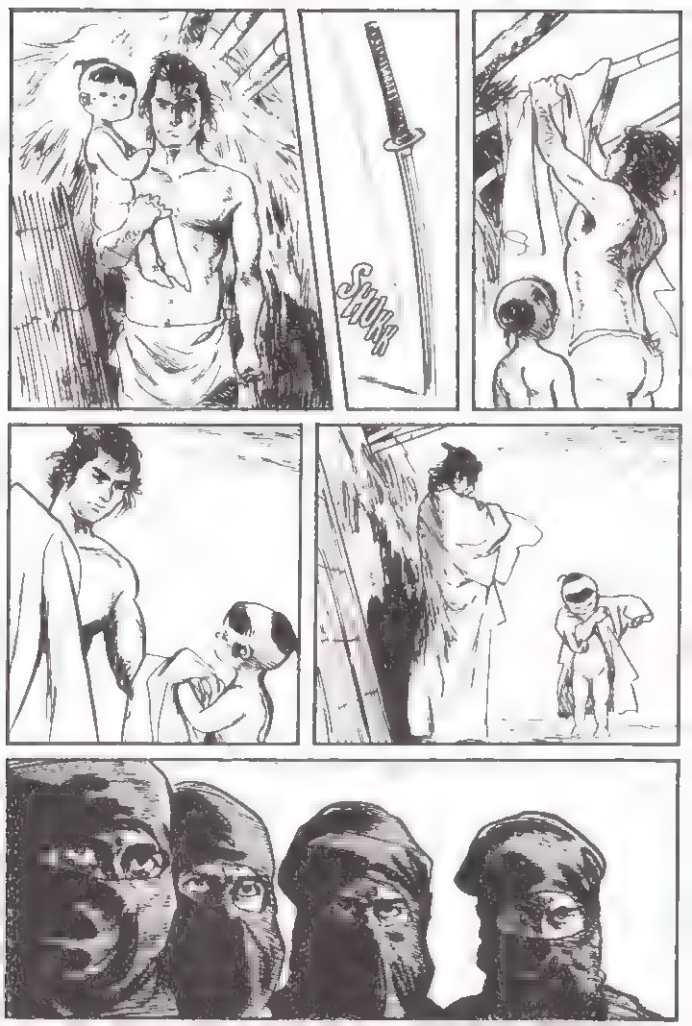


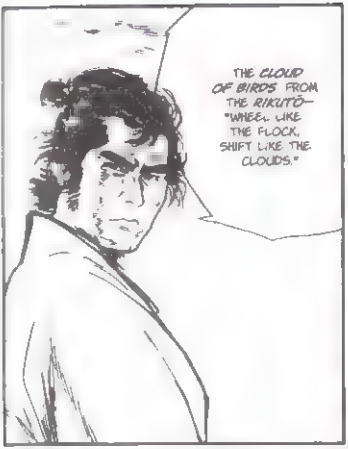
SHUSH

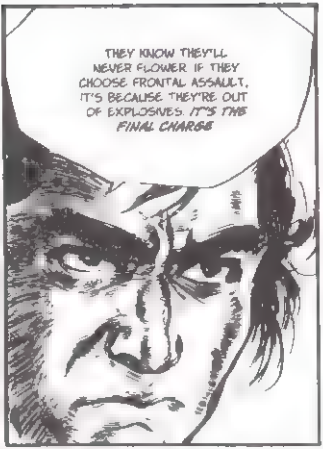
A ROSARY OF *MUKURIOJI* SEEDS... LEFT BY DEAD GRASS?

THEY COME AGAIN.



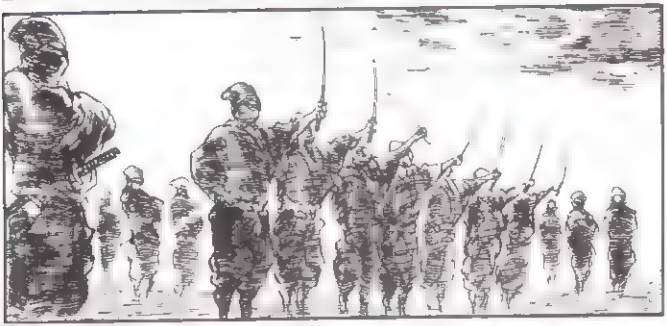

SHUK


THE *CLOUD OF BIRDS* FROM THE *RIKUTŌ*— "WHEEL, LIKE THE FLOCK, SHIFT LIKE THE CLOUDS."


THEY KNOW THEY'LL NEVER FLOWER IF THEY CHOOSE FRONTAL ASSAULT. IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE OUT OF EXPLOSIVES. *IT'S THE FINAL CHARGE*

BREAK THE FORMATION. *HARVEST* THE LAST OF THE GRASS
THEN ONLY *RETSUDŌ* REMAINS

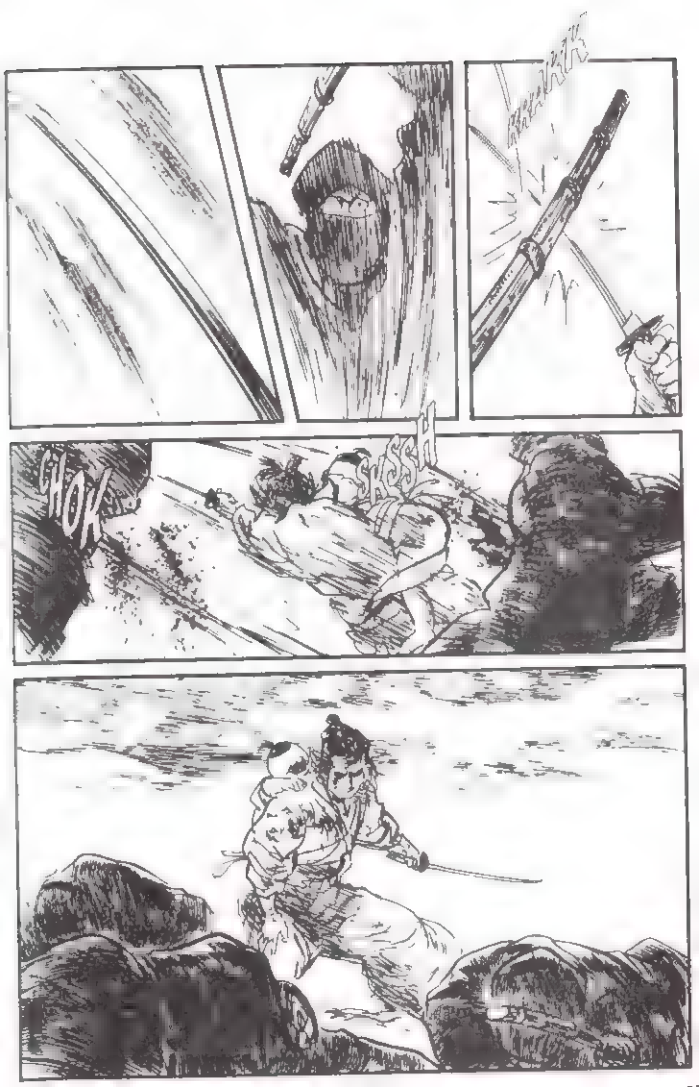
DAIGOROU THIS BATTLE DECIDES IT ALL!

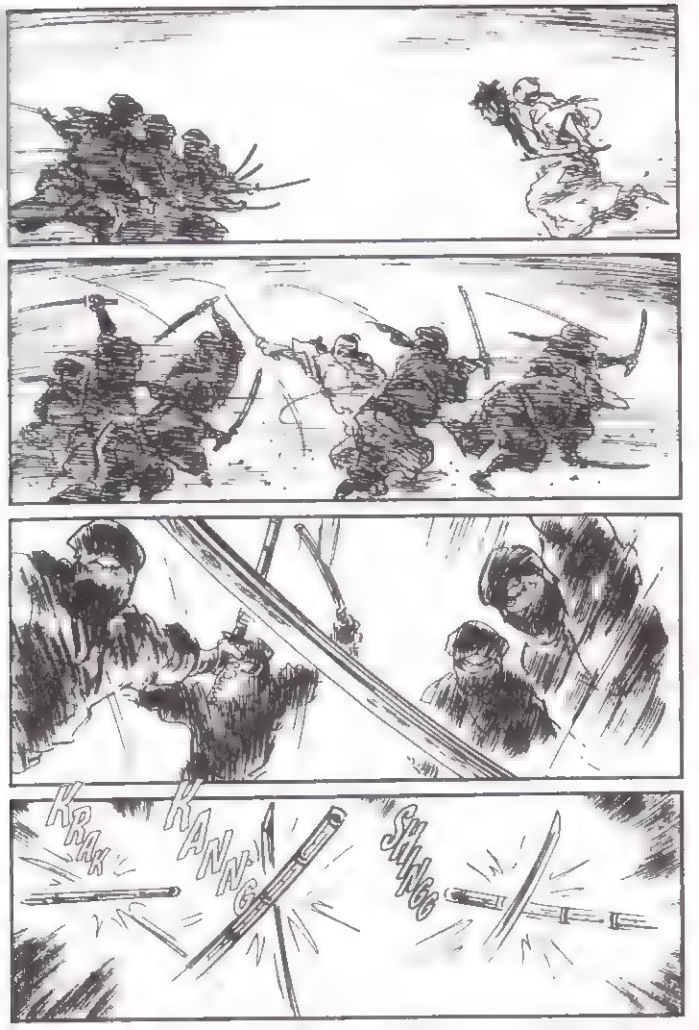


SKSSHH

FWHHT
FWHSSHH

WHDD
SKLSSH
KRANG
EWNT
KANNNG
SHNGG
KANNG


CHOK


KRRK
KANNG
SHNGG

KRAK
WHRAK
CLANG

THE LAY OF THE LAND MAY TILT A BATTLE, BUT HEAVEN ALONE DECIDES THE VICTOR NEVER WAS IT TRUER THAN ON THIS DAY
THEIR FATE ON THIS BATTLEFIELD
ONLY HEAVEN KNEW

BUT REJECTING HEAVEN . SPURNING THE HIGH GROUND. .

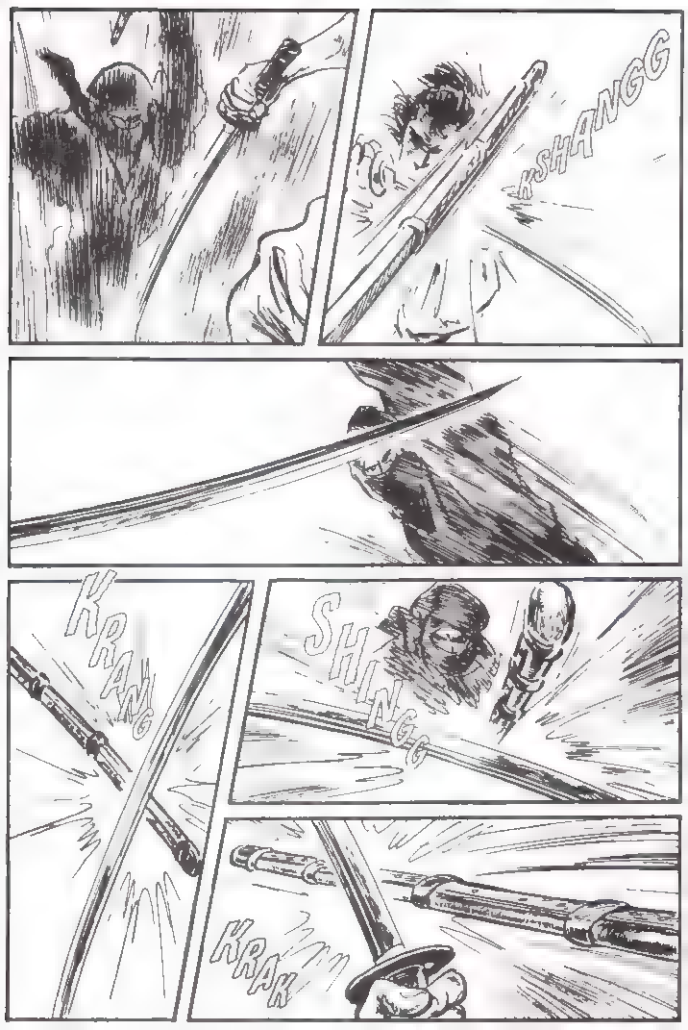
THEY STOOD IN *MUSHIFUMADŌ*, DEPENDING ON THEMSELVES ALONE.

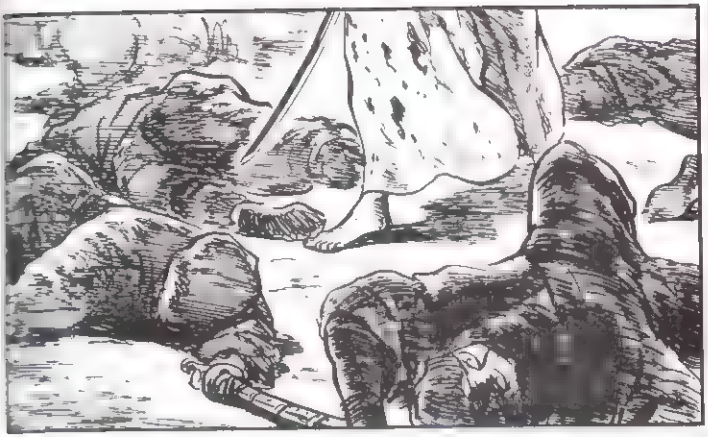
THEY DID NOT KNOW... . THAT THIS HEAVEN-THRUST BLADE. .

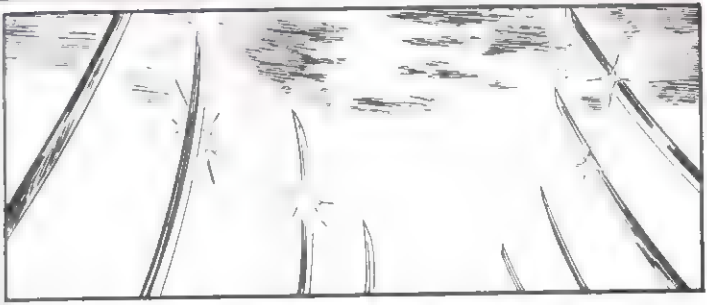
NOW CONCEALED A *SUBTLE WEAKNESS*, HAMMERED IN BY HACHIBĒ THE SWORD POLISHER

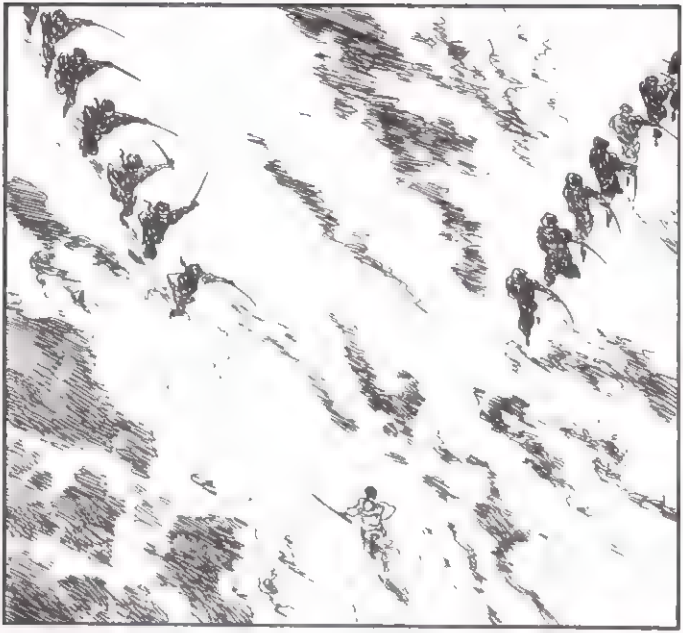
THEY DID NOT KNOW... THAT THE GRASS STRUCK WITH IRON-BOUND SCABBARDS TO *STRESS* THAT WEAKNESS.

GOEU-MEEU!
NOT EVEN
THE DEMONS
OF MEIFUMADŌ
COULD KNOW
KANG
KANG
KANG

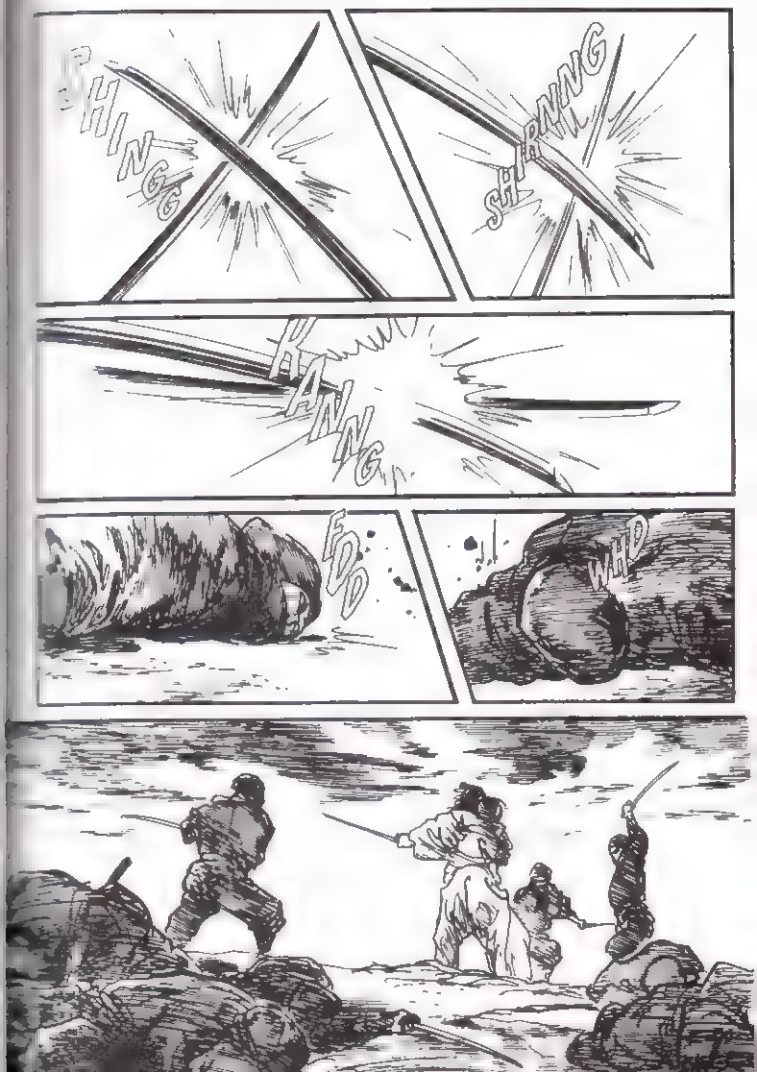

SHANGG
KRANG
SHINGG
KRAK

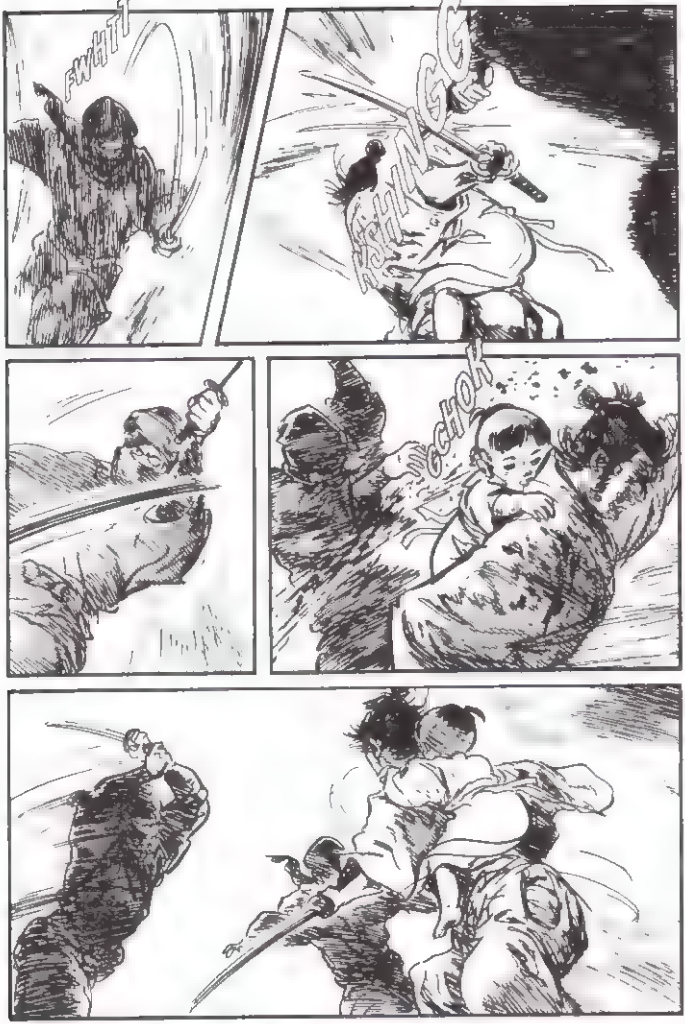






KANNG
SHINGG
KIINNG


SHING
SHRANG
KANG
EDD
WHO


FWHIT
ASHING
CHOK

SPANANG

THPP
CHUKK
WINGG
GHKK

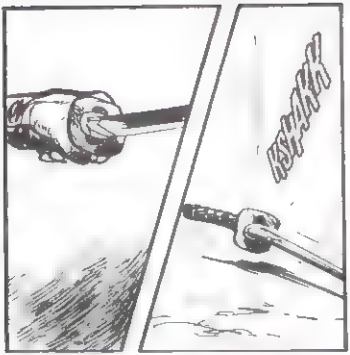
THP
PAPPAAA!

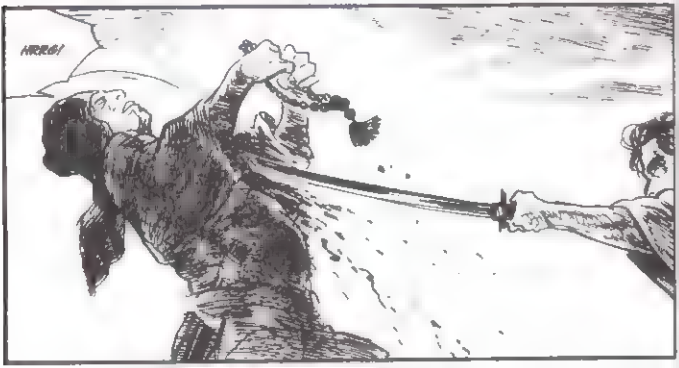
THE LAST OF THE GRASS ?
VERILY I AM KAGAMI TENZEN YAGYÜ KUSA!
WSH

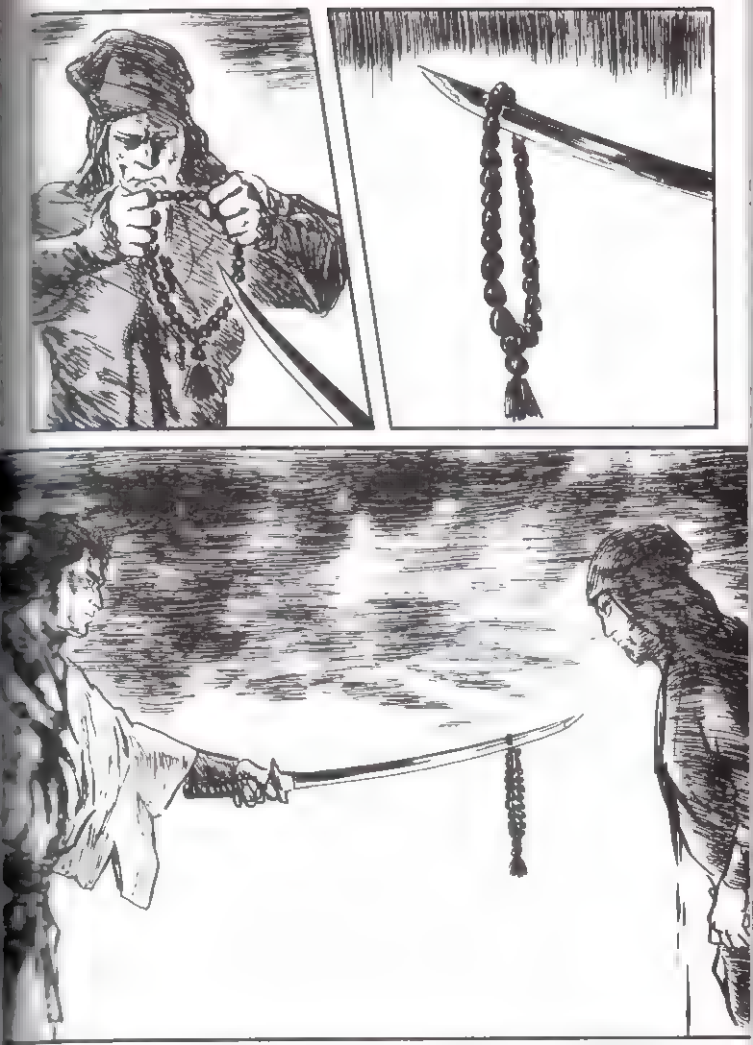
WHSSSH
WHTT
FWSSS

FWSH
SSSHUK

ITTŌ! WE DAMAGED YOUR DOTANUKI!! NOT RE-SUDŌ-SAMA... WE ALONE!
DO YOU CALL US COWARDS...?!
NO! SUCH TRICKERY IS PART OF BATTLE. I THOUGHT MY GUARD WAS PERFECT
IT WAS CUNNING WORTHY OF THE YAGYŪ'S SHINOBI!

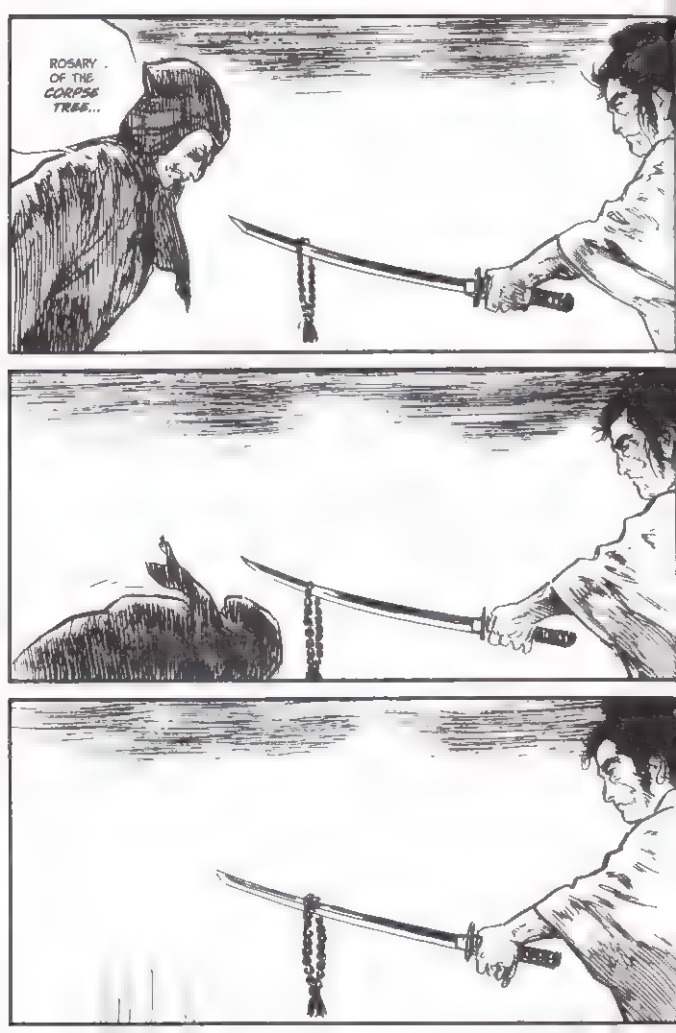

SSSSSSSS

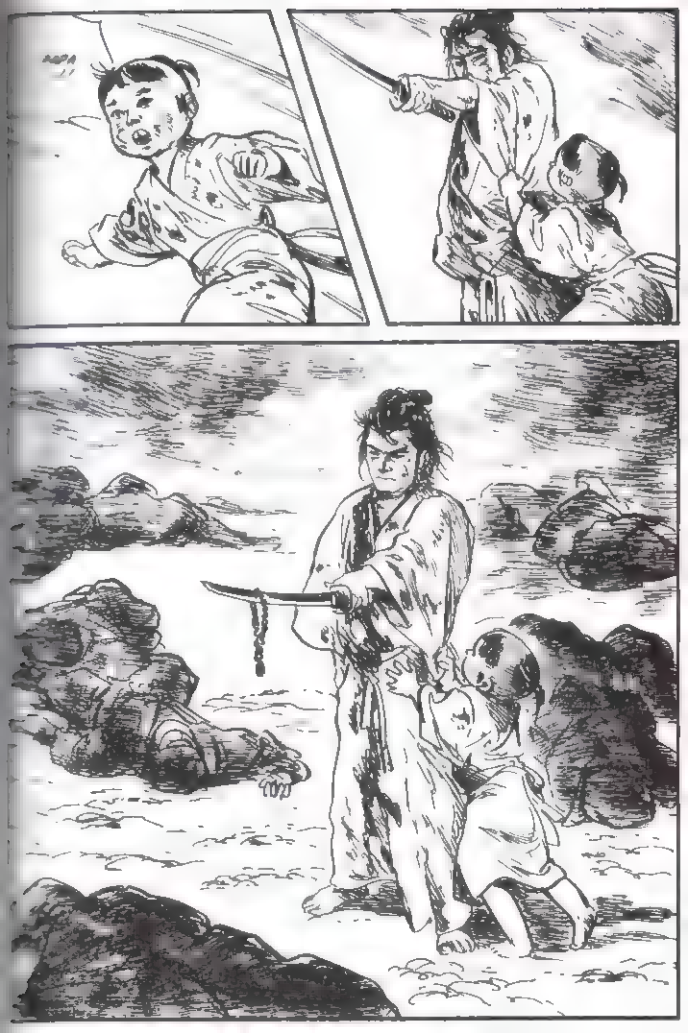

HRRG!

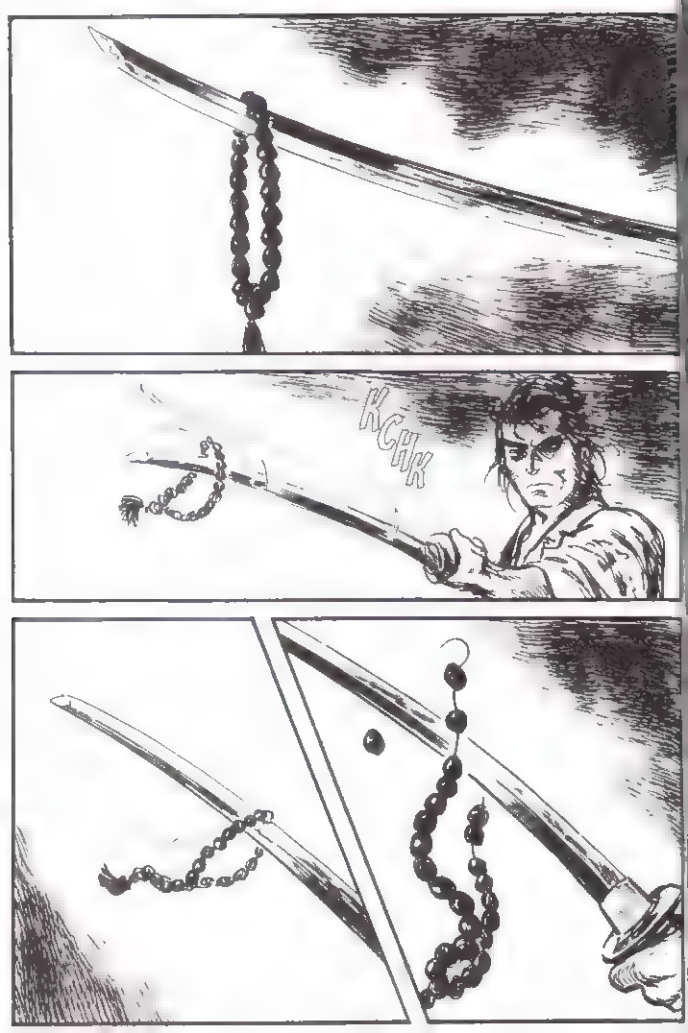


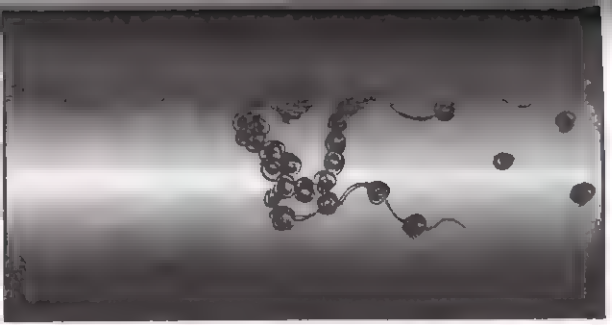
A NINJA'S LIFE. LIKE THESE SEEDS
WE DIE AT OUR MASTER'S WHIM.
AND THUS WE MAKE ROSARIES FROM THE SEEDS OF THE CORPSE TREE
THE CORPSE TREE SAY SOME, THE BODHI TREE OF THE SUTRAS.
BENEATH THAT TREE, THE BUDDHA ACHIEVED ENLIGHTENMENT HOW BETTER TO PRAY FOR OUR SOULS?

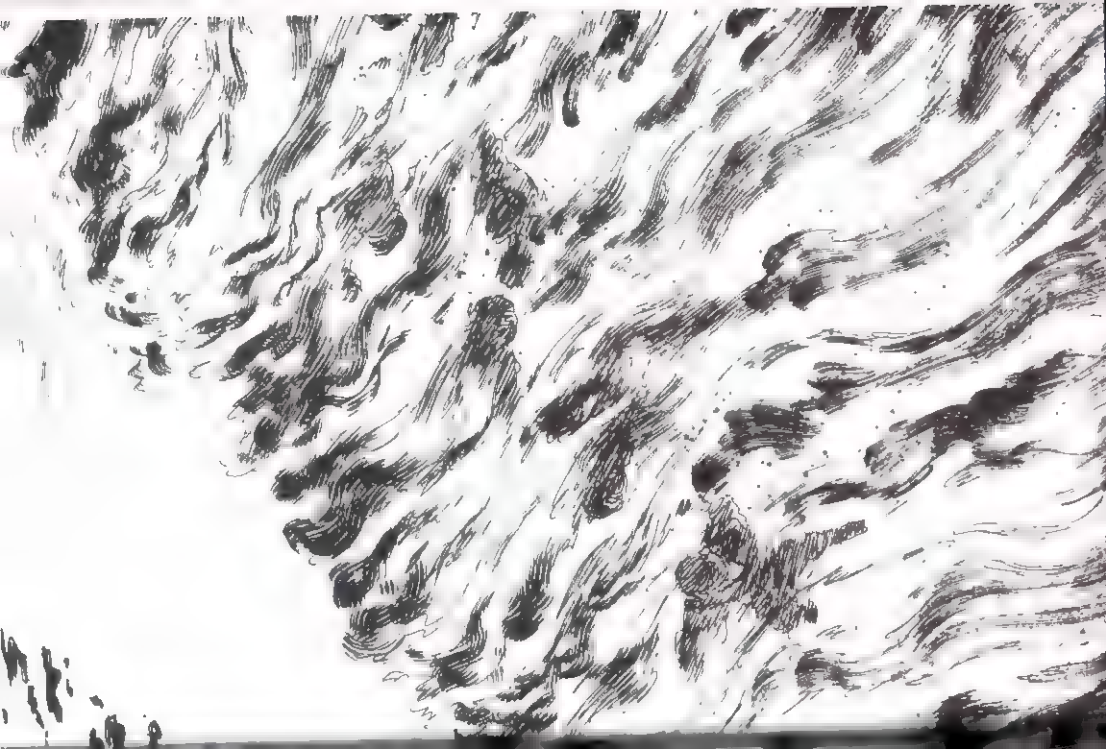
AND FOR THE SOULS OF YOU AND YOUR SON...
SO LET US PRAY
WARRIOR'S WAY SHINOBI'S WAY
WHY DO WE FIGHT, HUMANS ALL?
THE GRASS WITHERS YOUR LIFE DRAINS AWAY
PRAY ACCEPT THE ROSARY OF THE GRASS.

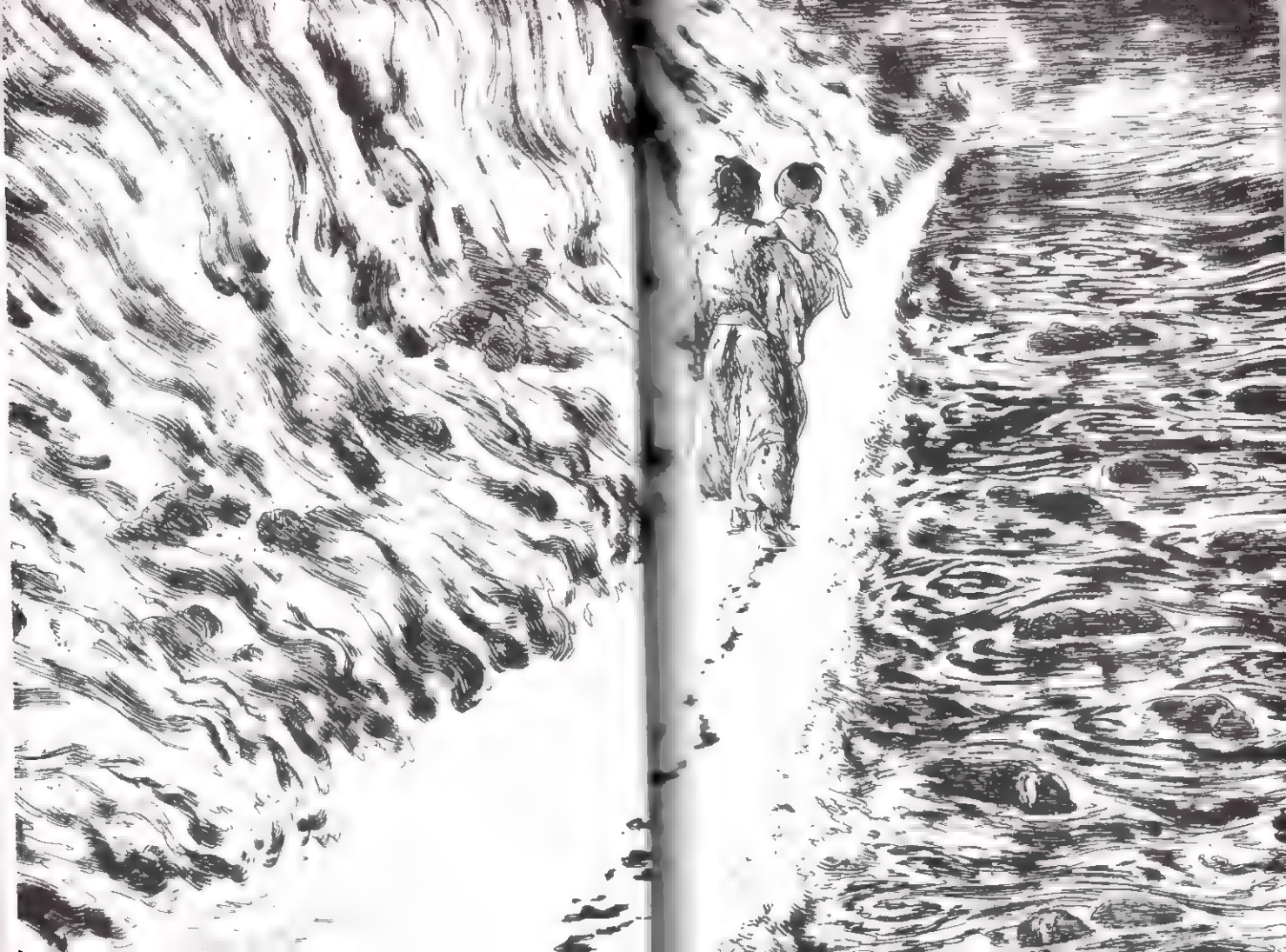

ROSARY OF THE CORPSE TREE...



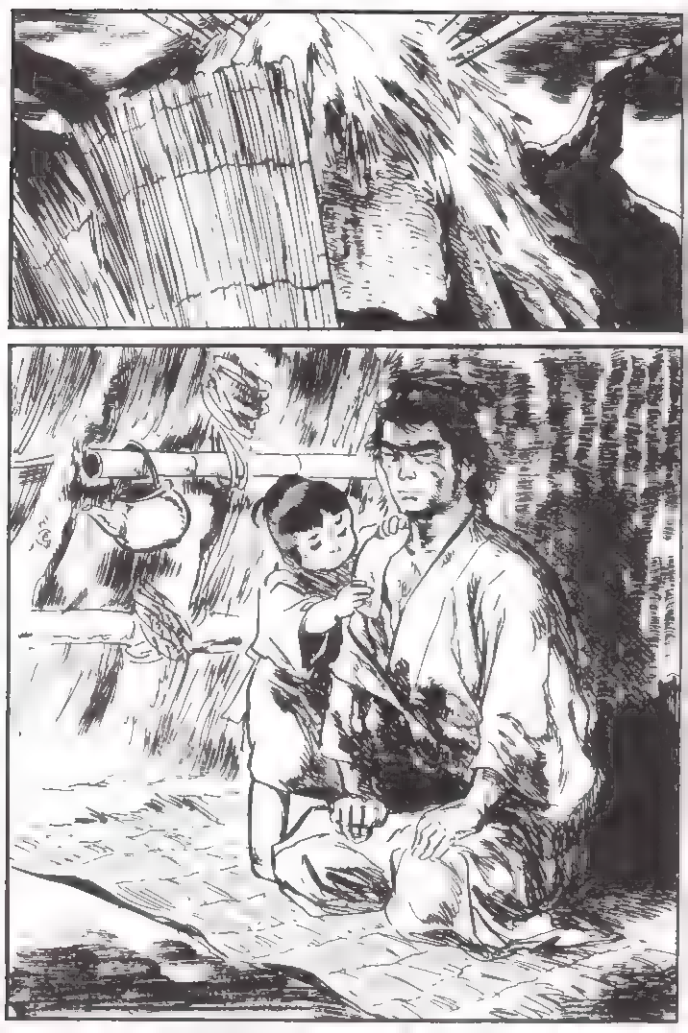

KCHK





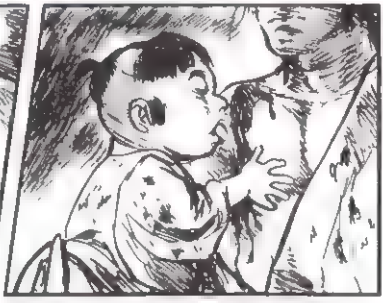


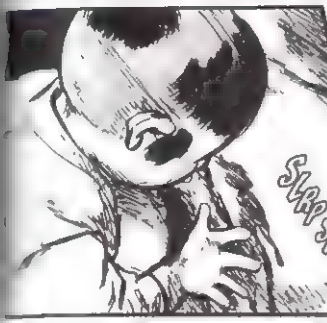
SWISSH



SPLSSHH
SKSSH

PAPA




SLRP SLRP

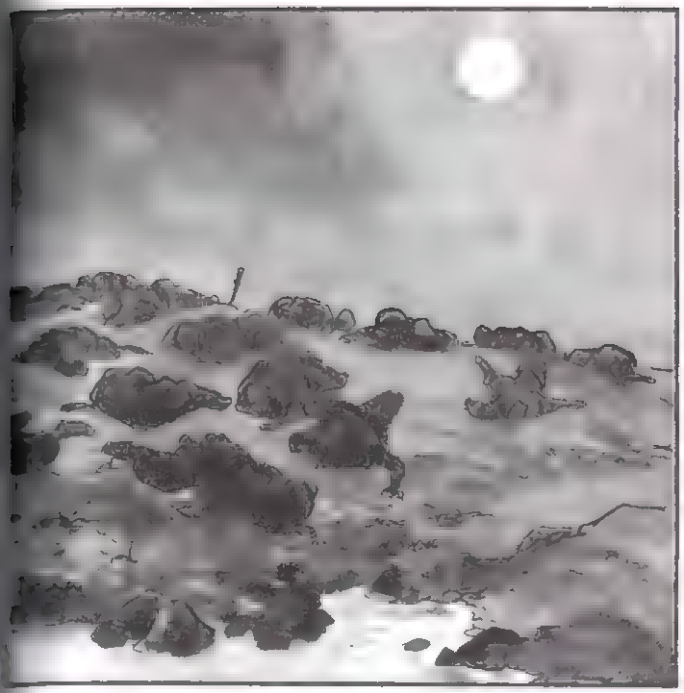
SLRP
SLRP

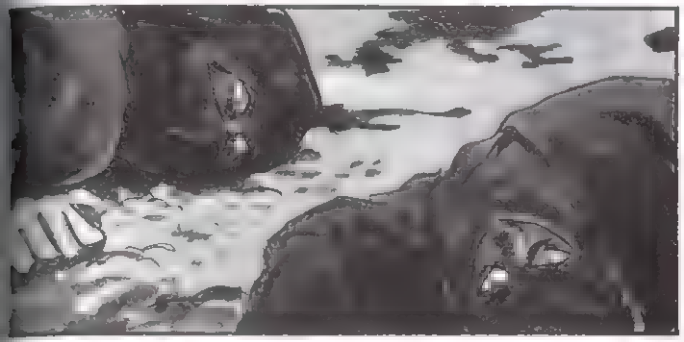
Slap Slap

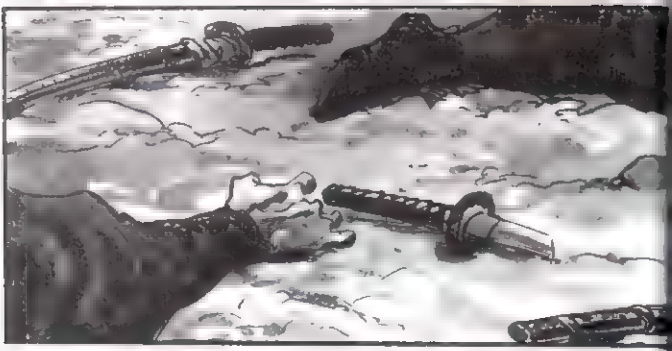
PAPA ?
PAPA...
PAPAA!

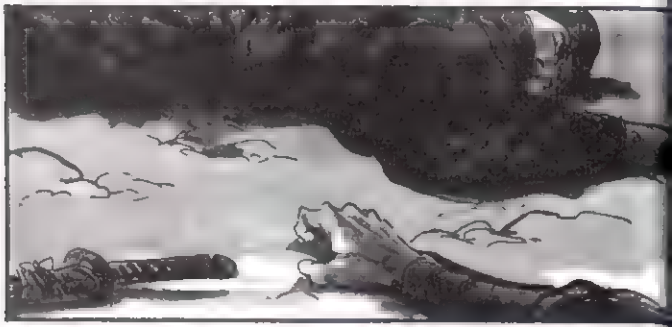
the hundred and thirty-ninth

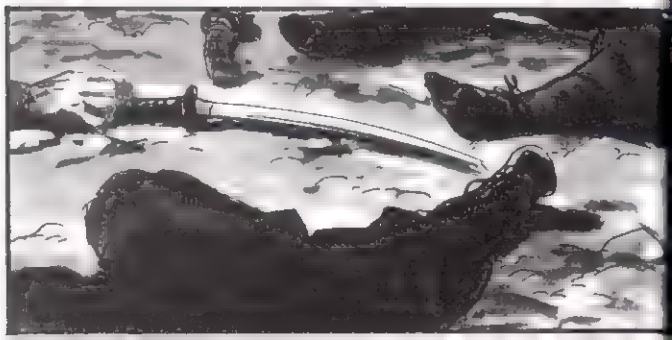
Flute and Wave

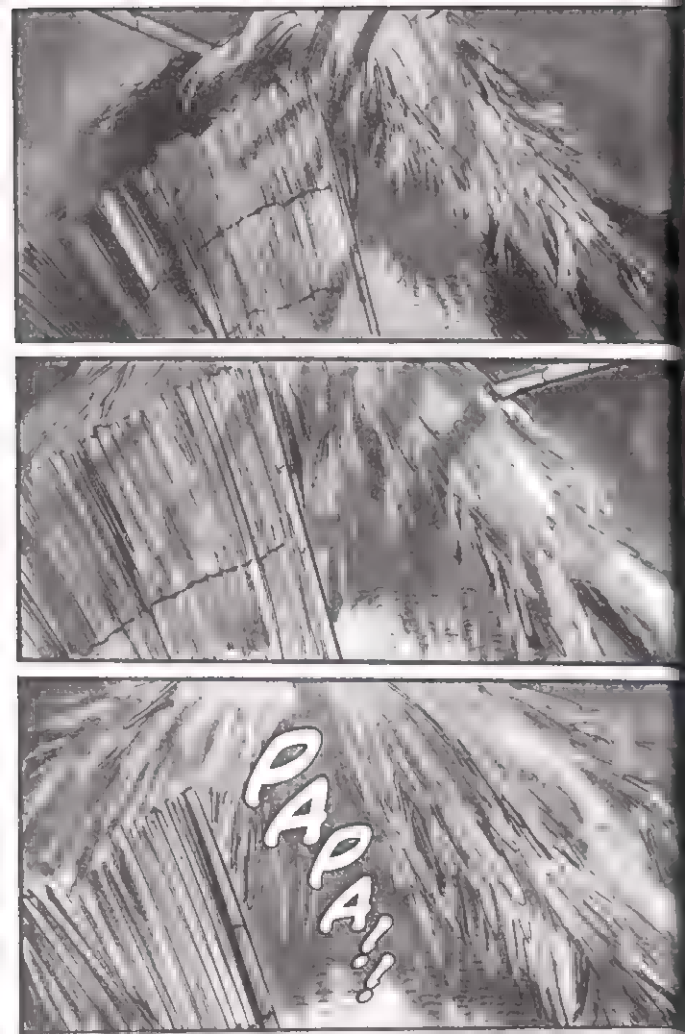


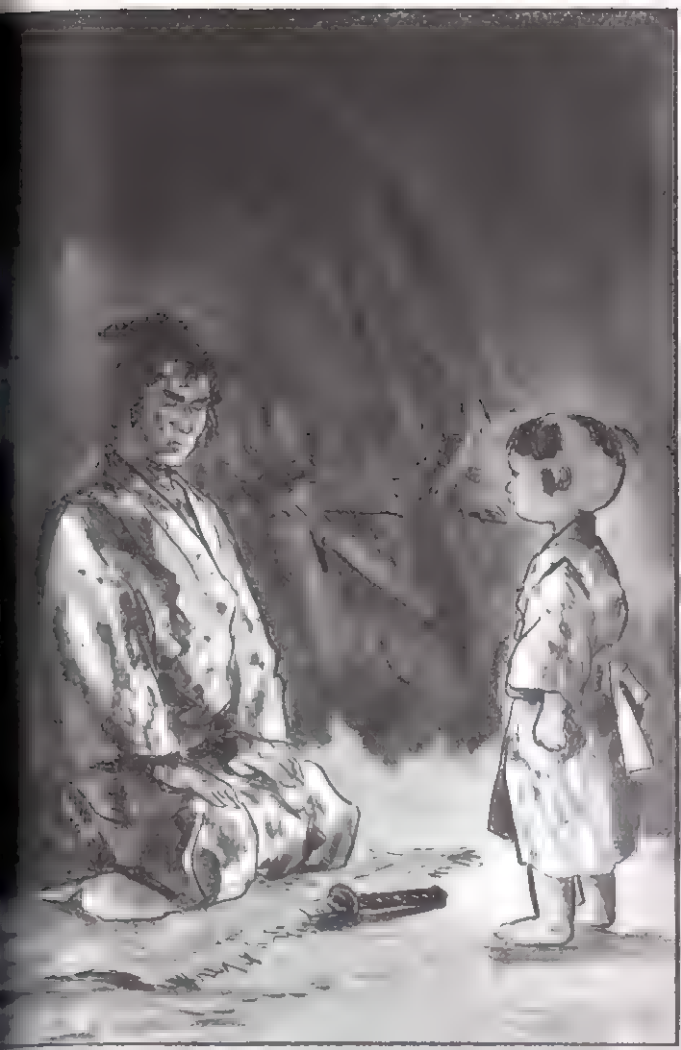






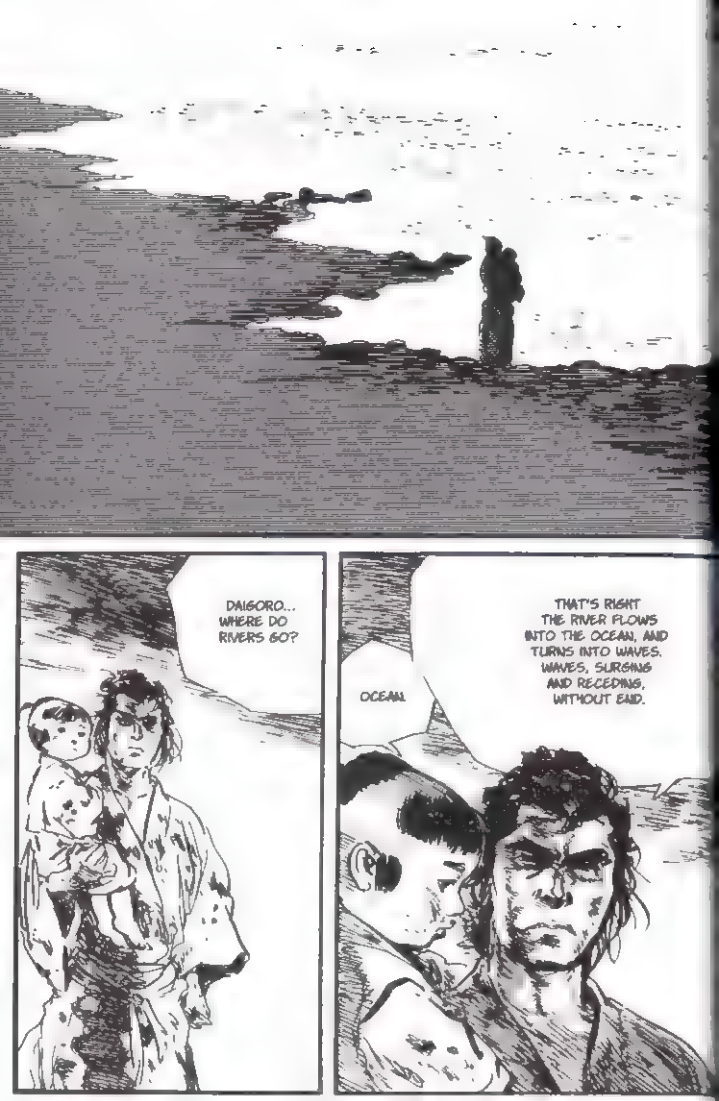


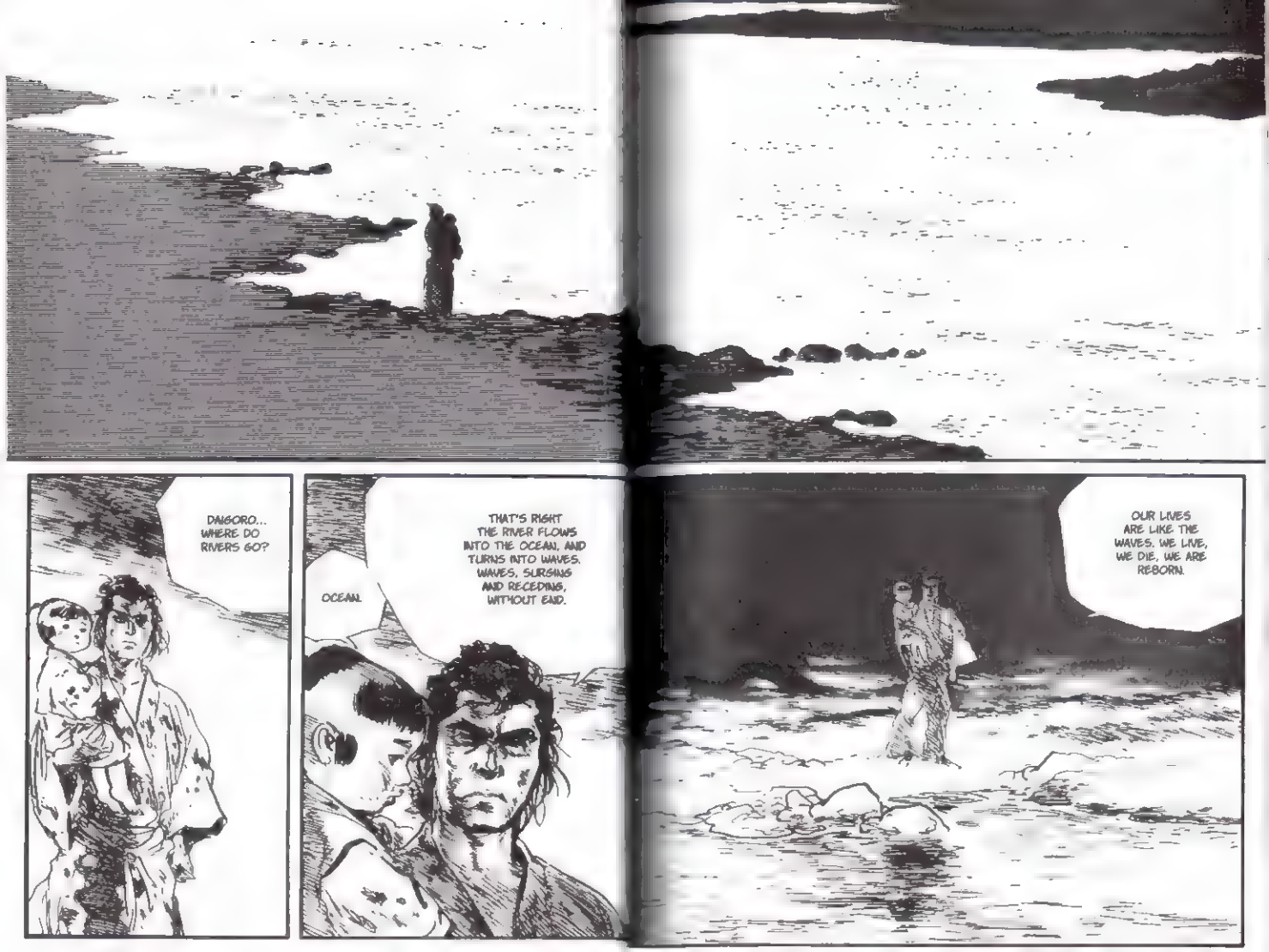

PAPA!!



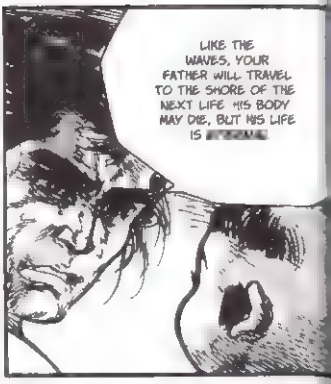
PAPA!

PAPA!!


DAIGORO... WHERE DO RIVERS GO?
OCEAN.
THAT'S RIGHT THE RIVER FLOWS INTO THE OCEAN, AND TURNS INTO WAVES. WAVES, SURGING AND RECEDING, WITHOUT END.


DAIGORO... WHERE DO RIVERS GO?
THAT'S RIGHT THE RIVER FLOWS INTO THE OCEAN, AND TURNS INTO WAVES. WAVES, SURGING AND RECEDING, WITHOUT END.
OCEAN.
OUR LIVES ARE LIKE THE WAVES. WE LIVE, WE DIE, WE ARE REBORN.

OUR LIVES ARE LIKE THE WAVES WE LIVE, WE DIE, WE ARE REBORN.



YOURS TOO, DAIGORO.

[redacted] LIVES ARE INDESTRUCTIBLE. *IMMORTAL!*

THOUGH WAVES BREAK AND BLOOD FLIES, NEVER *SHRINK* THOUGH MY BODY FALLS, NEVER *QUAIL*

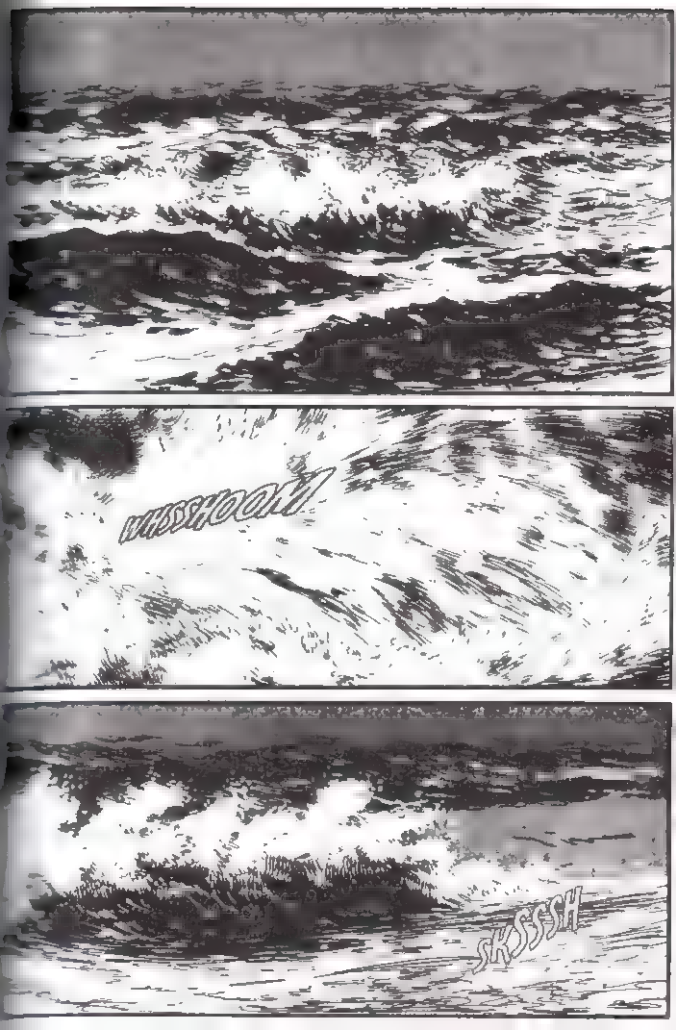
THOUGH MY EYES SHUT, MY LIPS CLOSE.. DO NOT *FEAR*

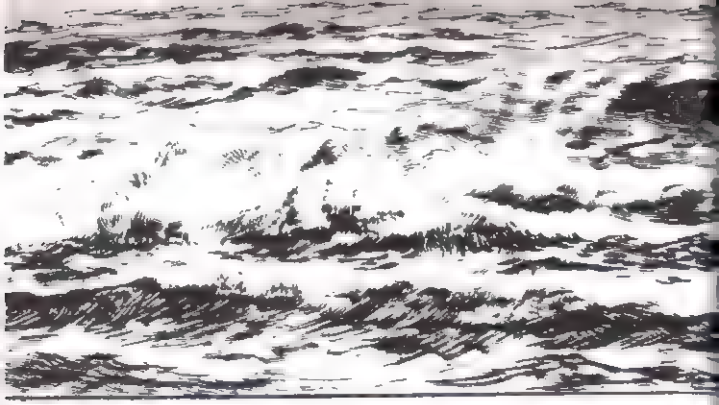
IN THAT WORLD OF REBIRTH, I'M *STILL* YOUR *FATHER*

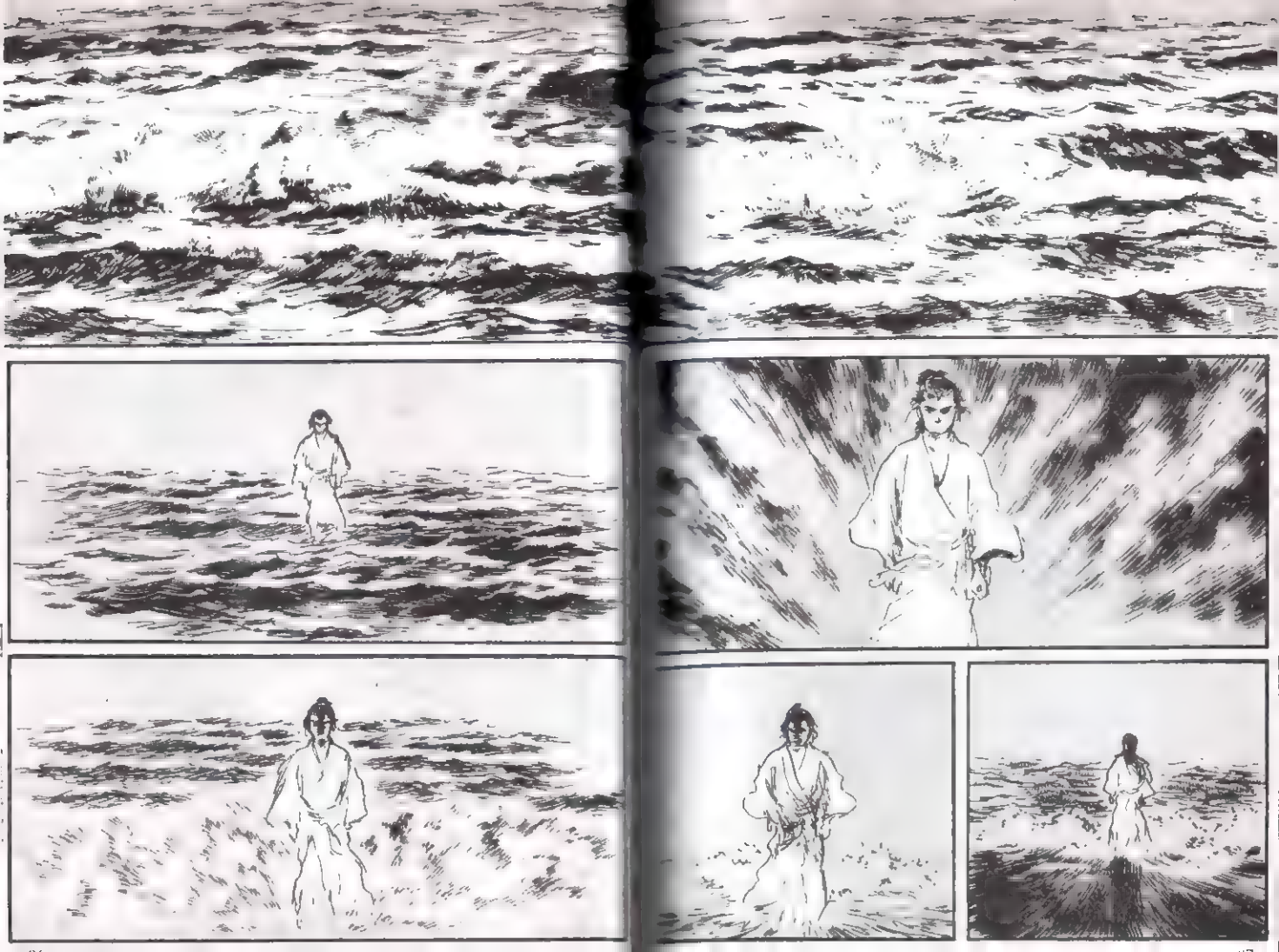
IN THAT WORLD AND *ALL* WORLDS, *YOU* ARE MY *SON!*

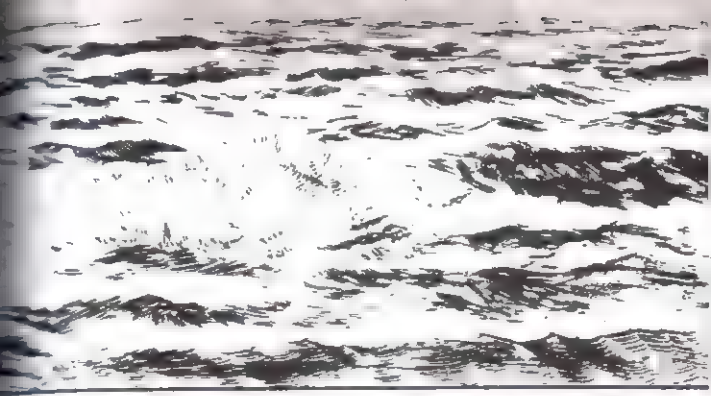
WE ARE *FATHER* AND *CHILD! FOREVER!*

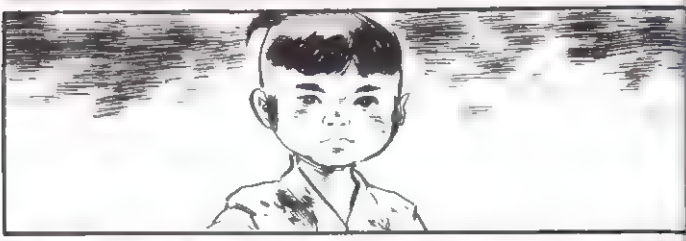
BUT YOUR FATHER'S BODY CAN'T FALL *YET* THE GRASS HAS WITHERED *BUT A YAGYŪ REMAINS!*
COME, RETSUDŌ! SO LONG AS THESE LIMBS MOVE AND MY EYES SEE. .
. UNTIL MY FINAL *DROP* OF *BLOOD* FALLS, THIS BATTLE *SHALL NOT END!*

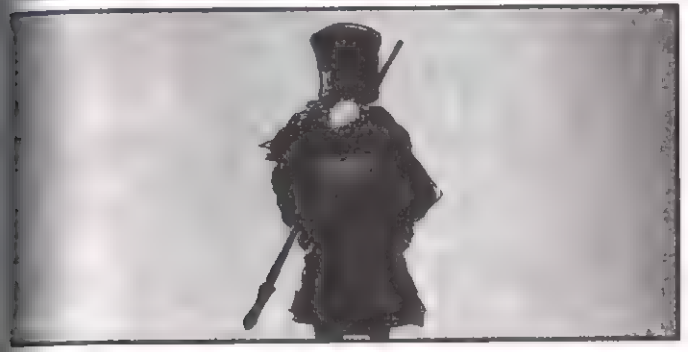

WUSSHOOM!
SKSSSH!

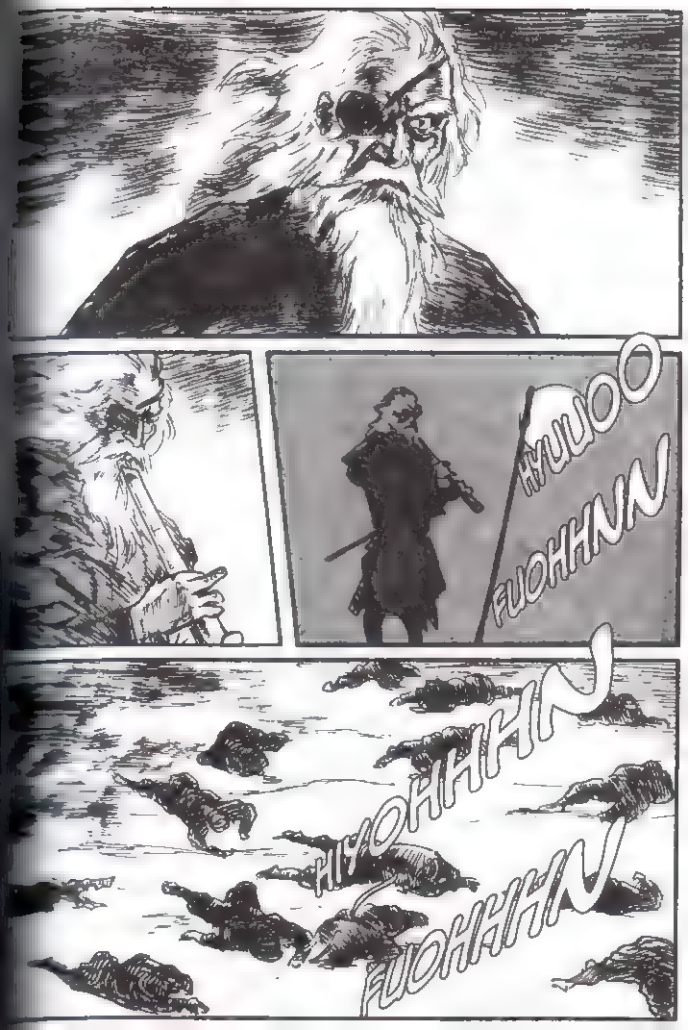











HUUOO
FUOHHNN
HUOHHFN
FUOHHHN

HYUUUUU
RYUU
BYUUUU
HYOHH

HYOHHN
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HYUURU
HYOHN
RUUOO

FYUHHHN
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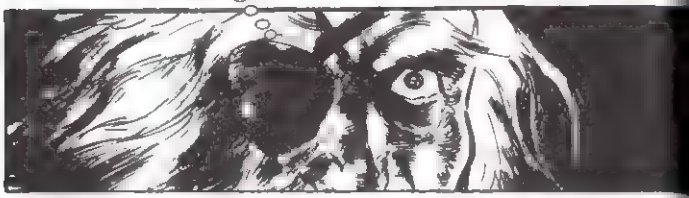
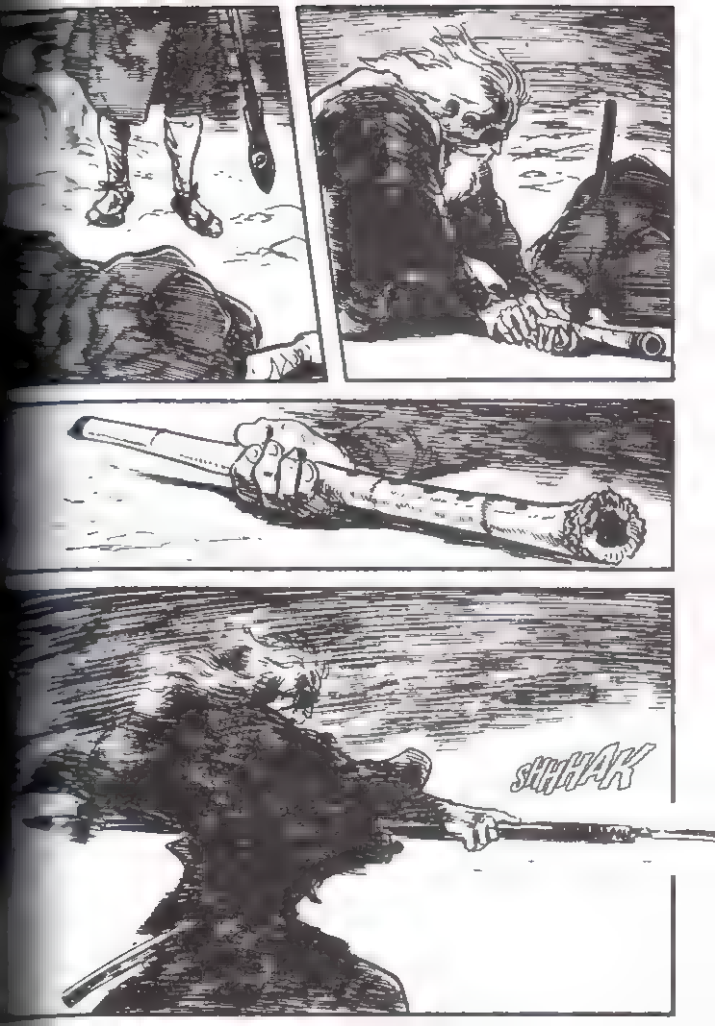
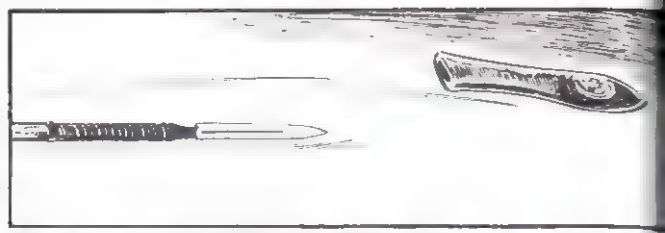
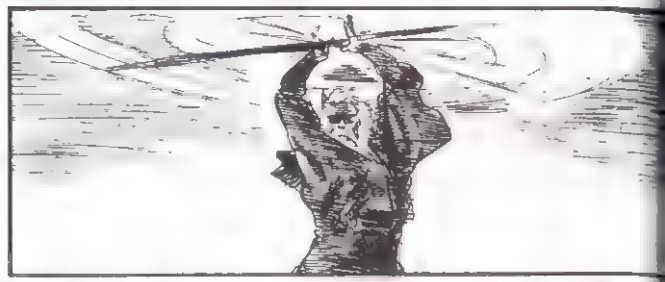
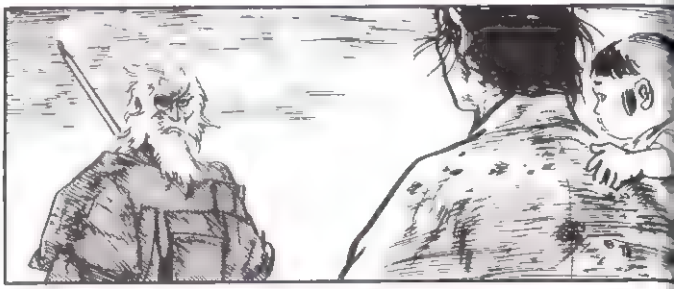
SHUUUOO

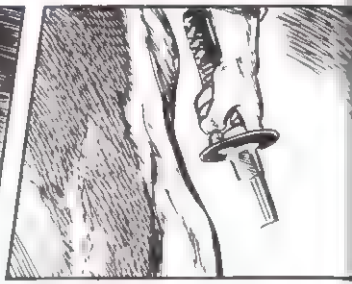


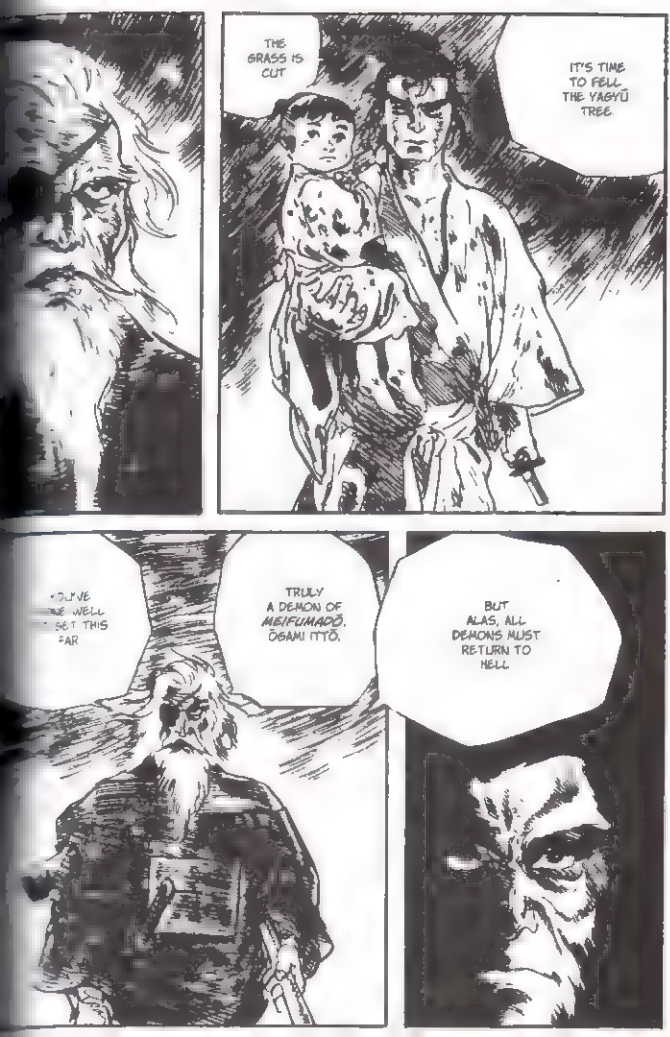

SHHHAK



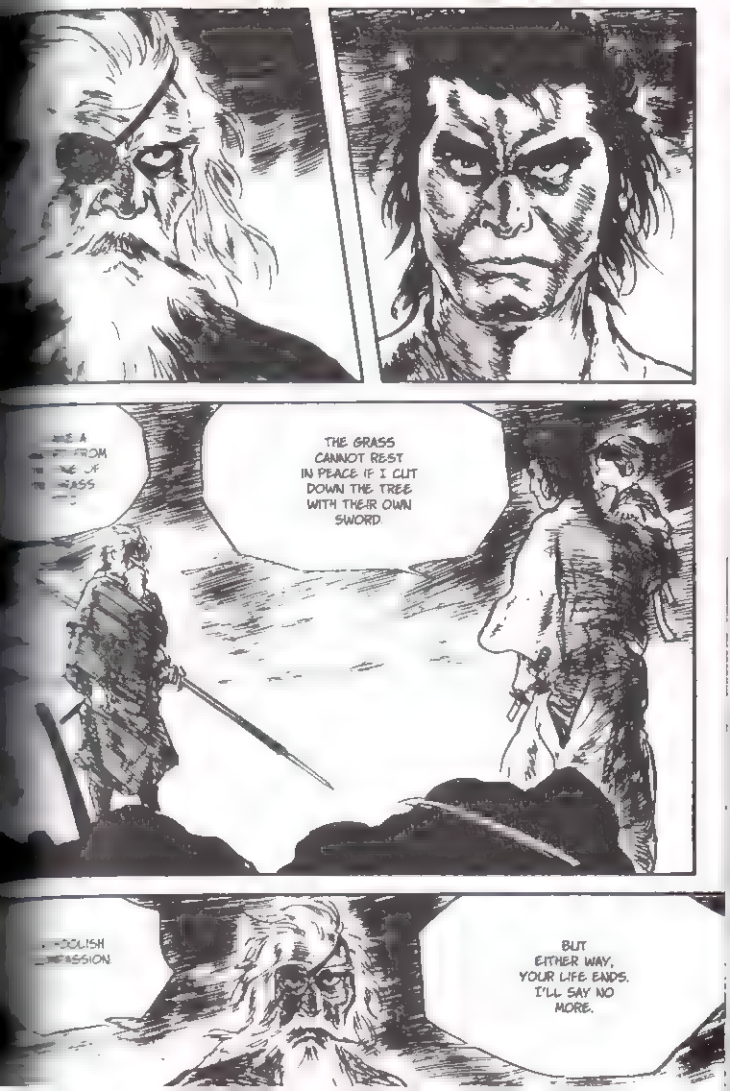




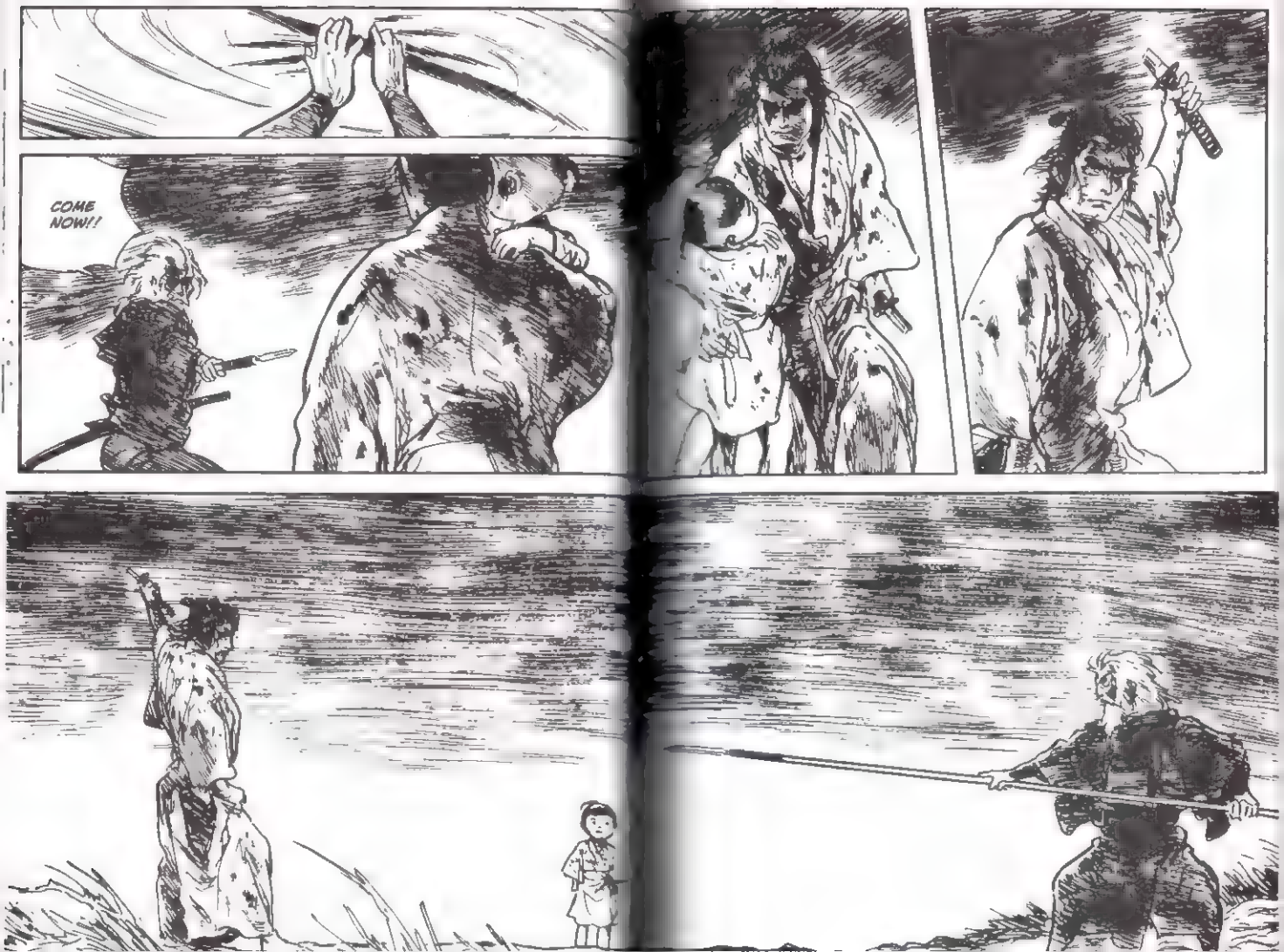


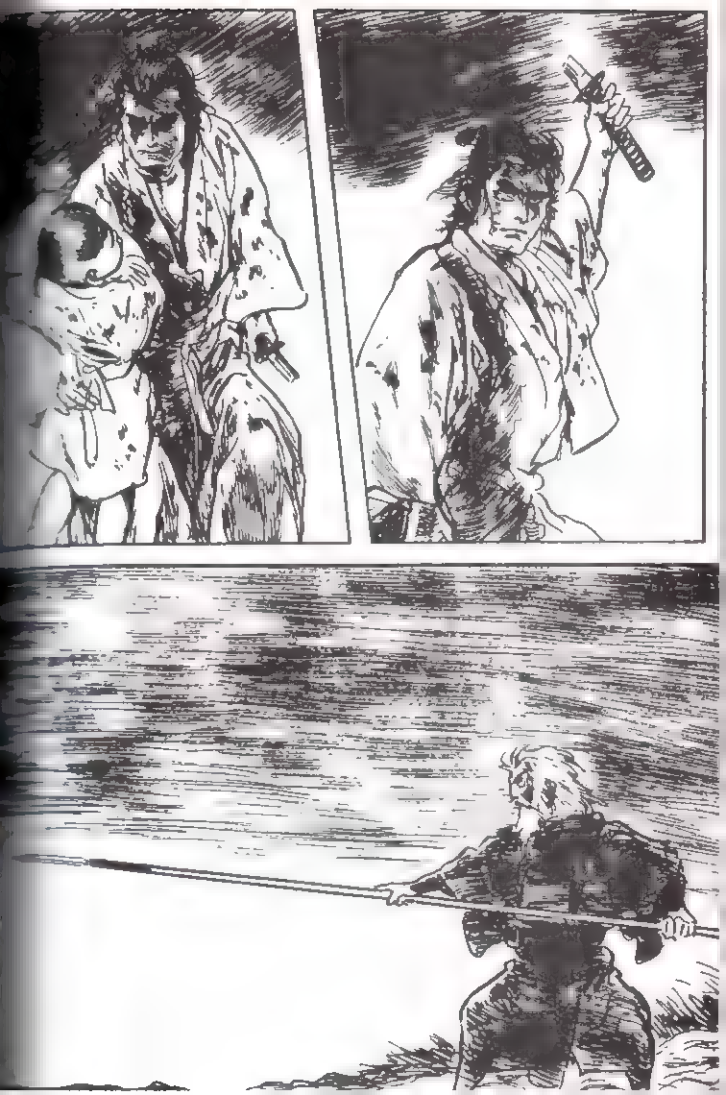

THE GRASS IS CUT
IT'S TIME TO FELL THE YAGYŪ TREE
YOU'VE DONE WELL TO GET THIS FAR
TRULY A DEMON OF MEIFUMADŌ. ŌGAMI ITTŌ.
BUT ALAS, ALL DEMONS MUST RETURN TO HELL

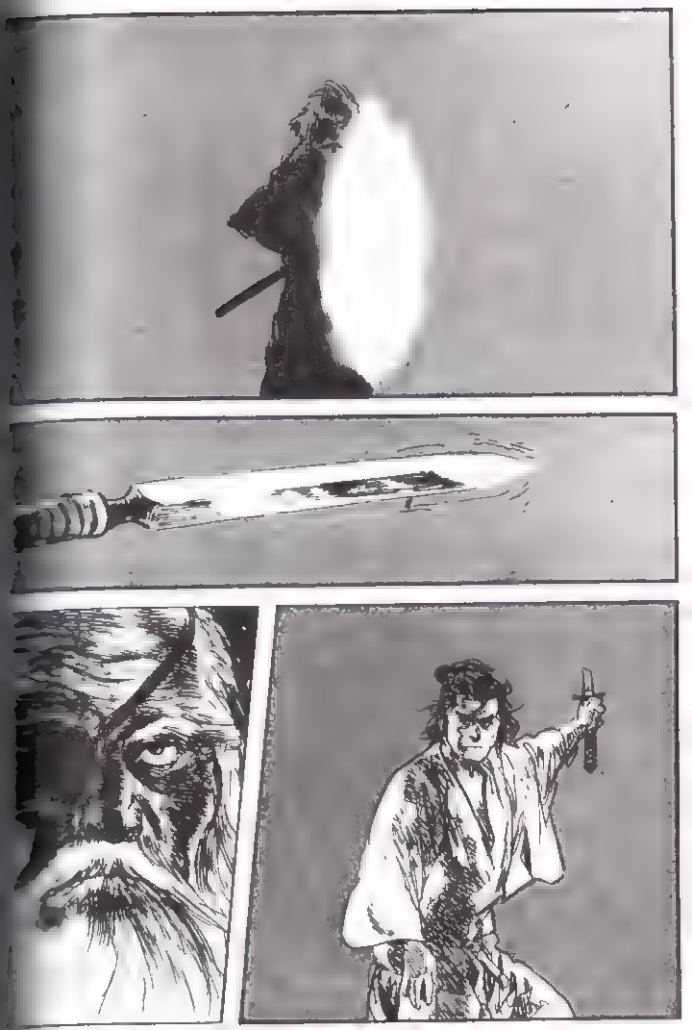
YOU'VE DRUNK DEEP OF MY CLAN'S BLOOD. YOUR FINE DŌTANKUKI IS BROKEN.
AND NOW THAT WOUND YOU AND YOUR SON, WILL NOT SEE THE DAWN. ACCEPT THIS.
YOUR CLAN REIGNED THROUGHOUT JAPAN, AND NOW SEE WHAT'S LEFT
TRUNK WITHERS WITHOUT ITS ROOTS I CAN TOPPLE IT WITH MY DYING BREATH.

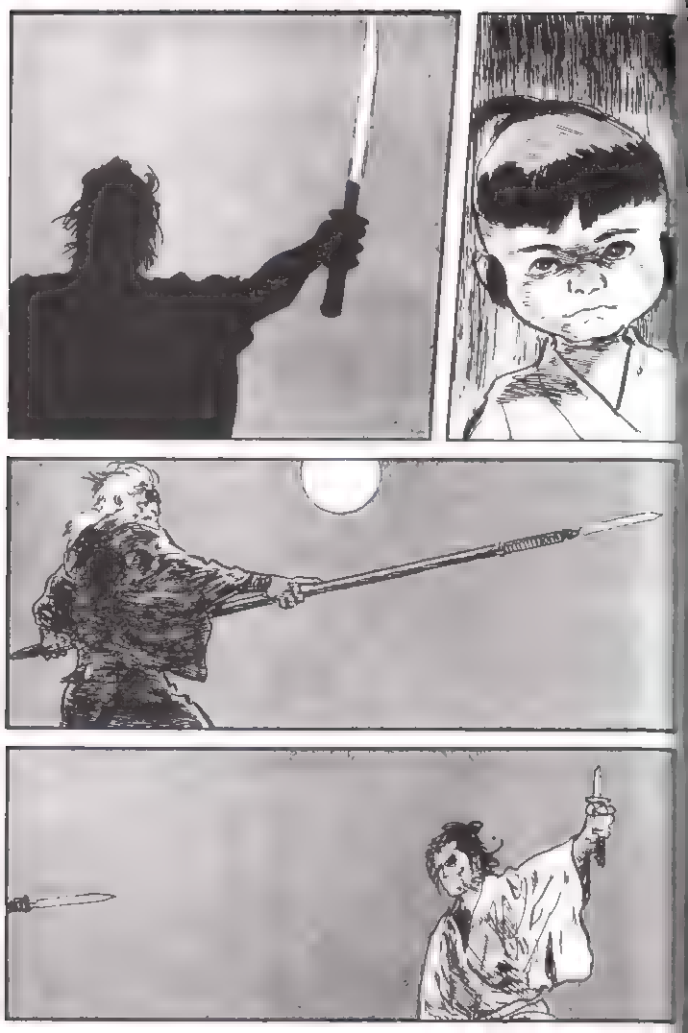

THE GRASS CANNOT REST IN PEACE IF I CUT DOWN THE TREE WITH THEIR OWN SWORD.
BUT EITHER WAY, YOUR LIFE ENDS. I'LL SAY NO MORE.

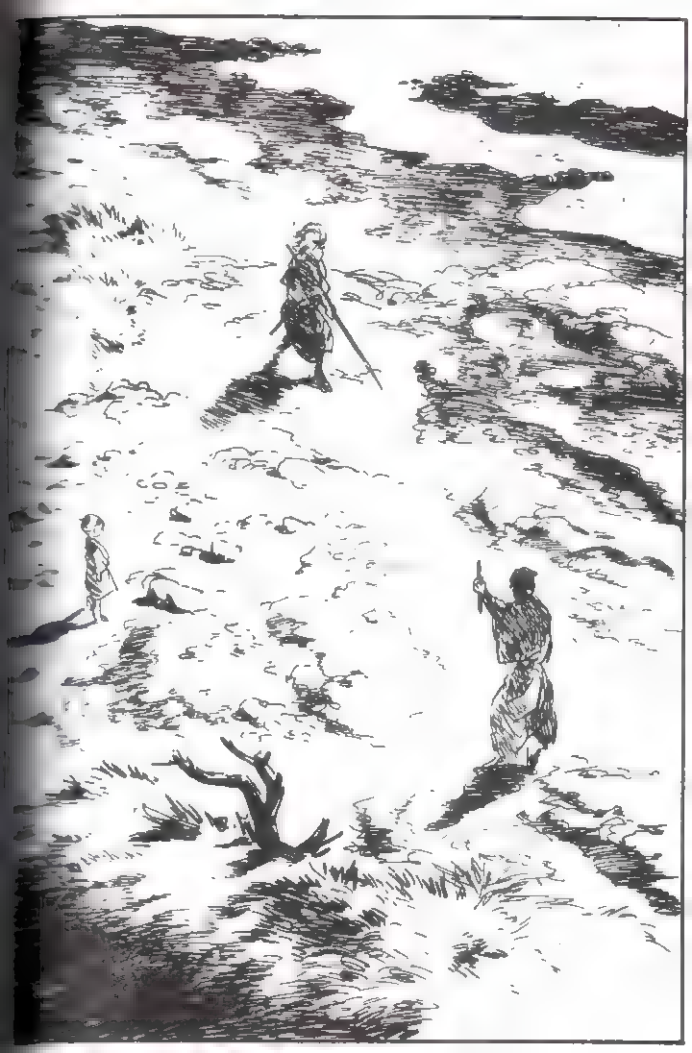
COME NOW!!

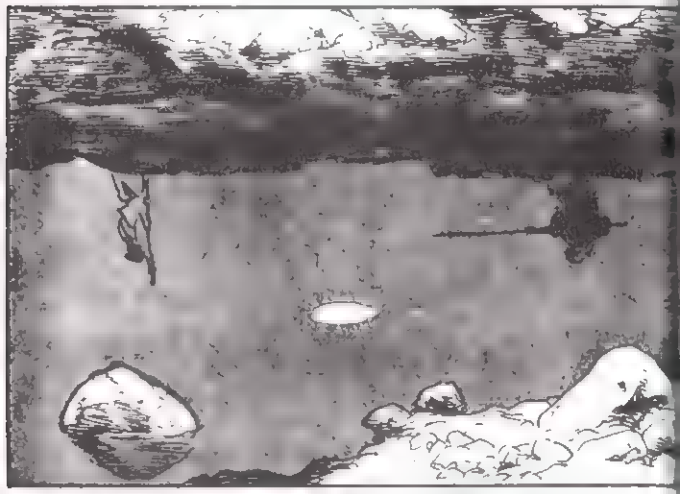

COME NOW!!

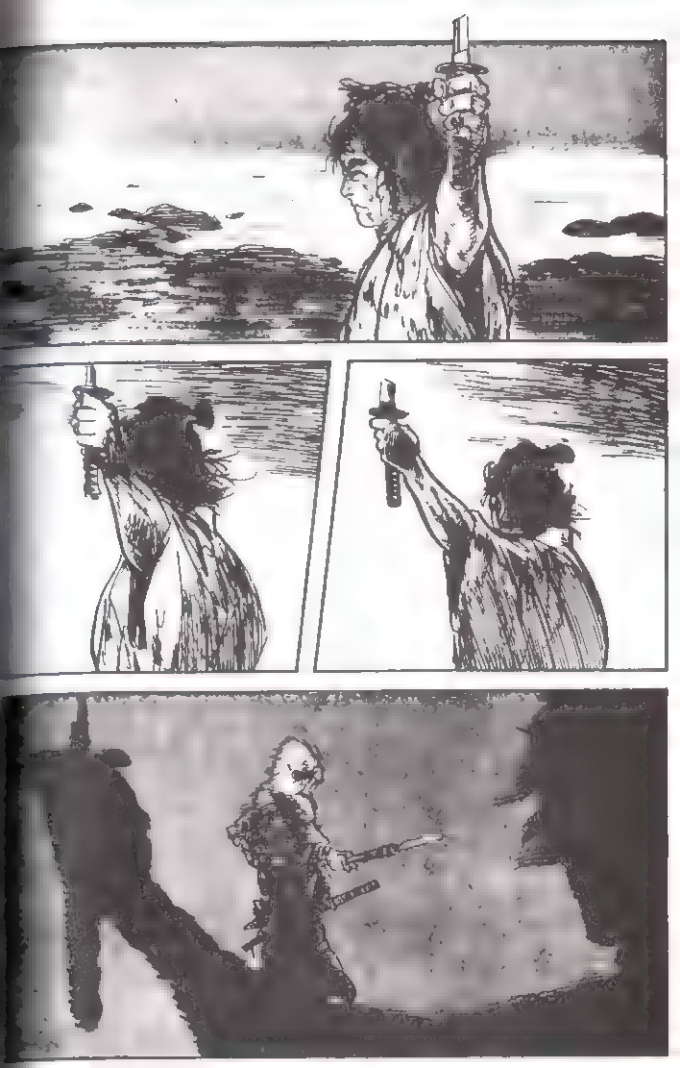


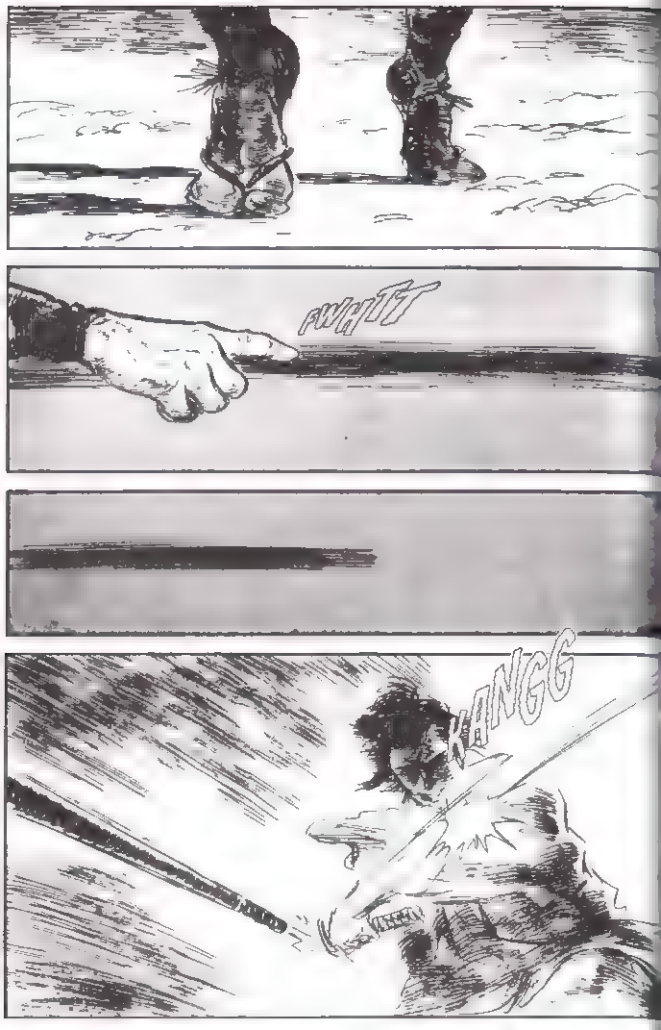


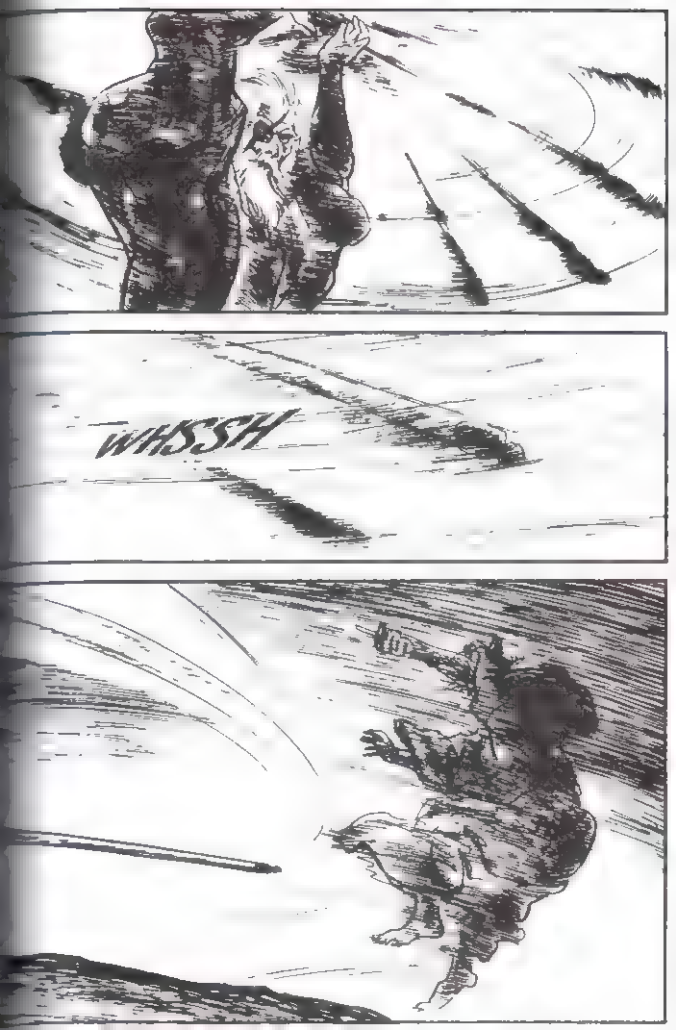


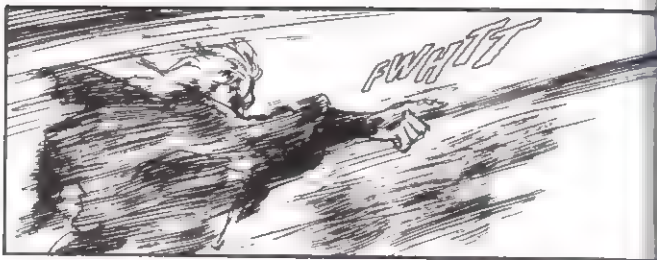







FWHIT
KANGG


WHSSH

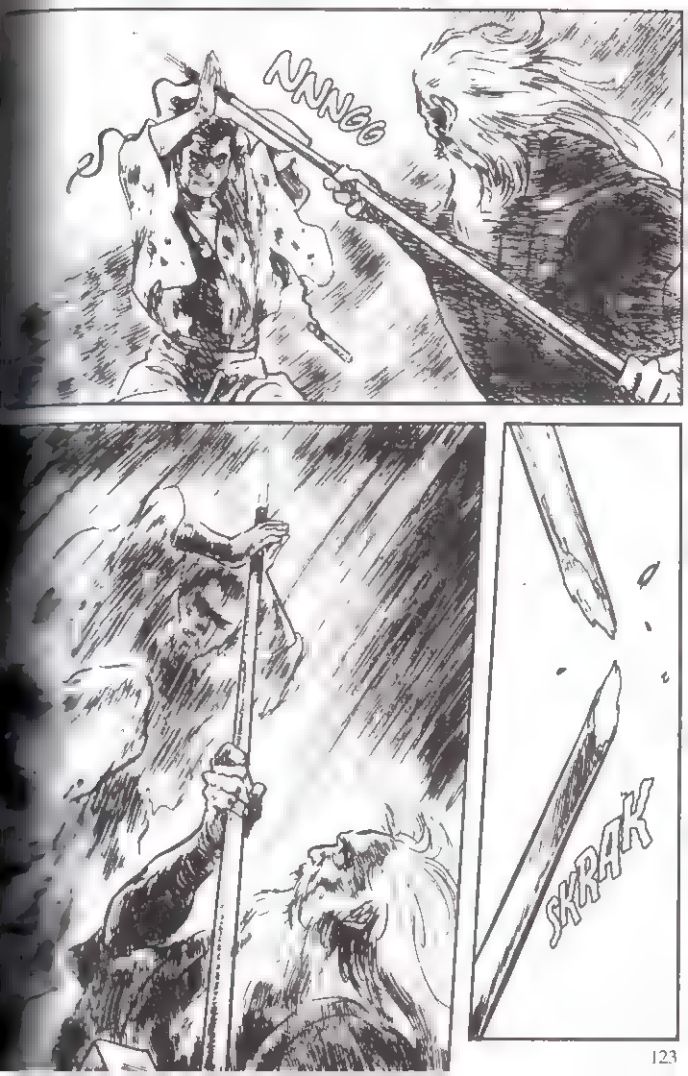

FWHIFF

KANG
KANG
KANG

FHSSHH

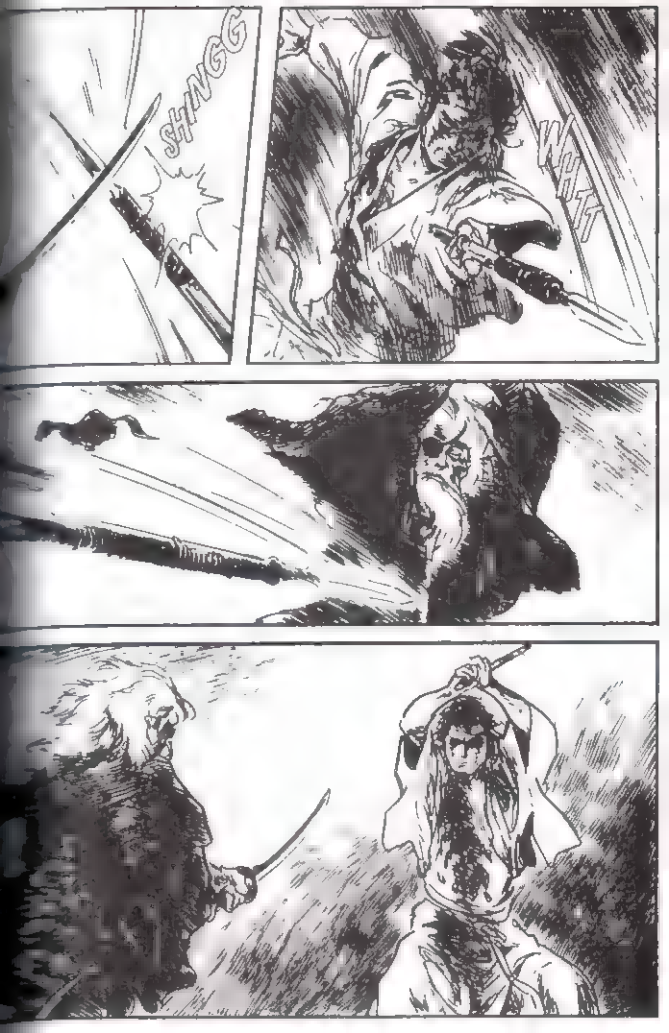
WIT
KSHING
RYAHH!

HRANGPY
SPEAR
CAPTURE!

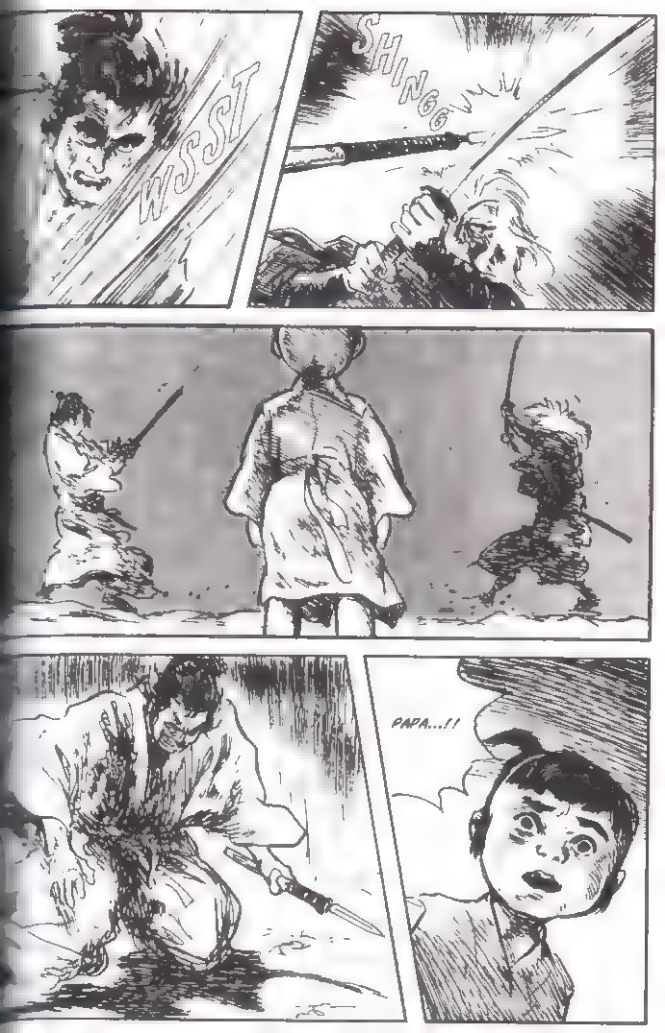

NNNGG
SKRAK

KLOKK

WHISSH!


SHNGG
WHIT

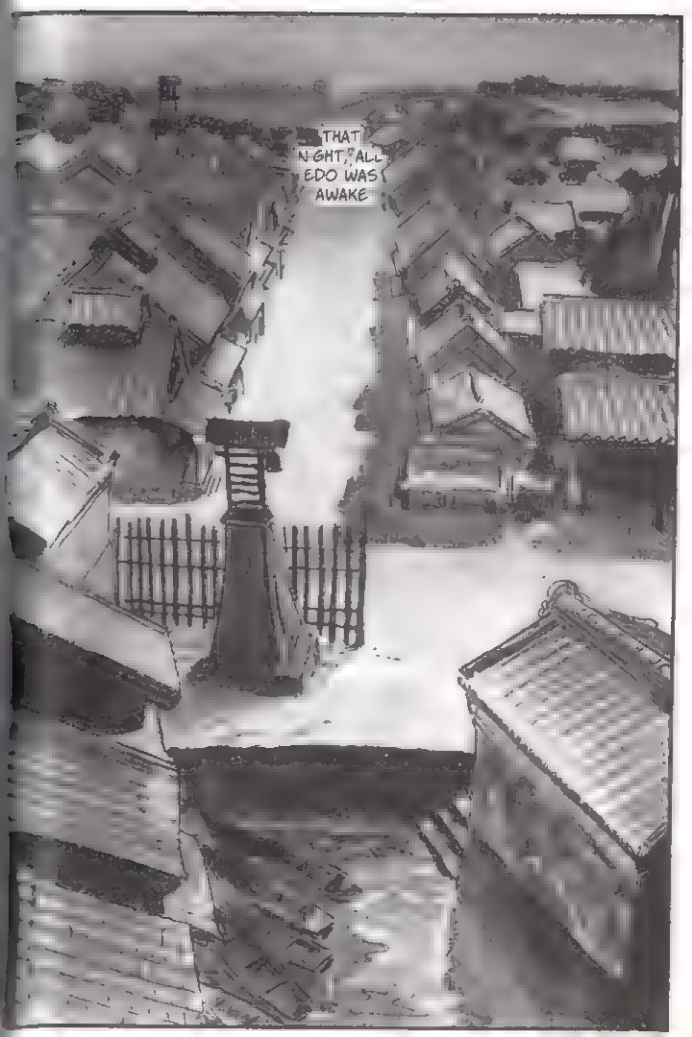
WHSSH
KANG


WSSST
SHING
PAPA...!!

FWHIT

the hundred and fortieth

The Lotus Throne


THAT NIGHT, ALL EDO WAS AWAKE

THE STREETS WERE EMPTY BUT IN EVERY HOUSE WITH EYES AND EARS THAT COULD NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR

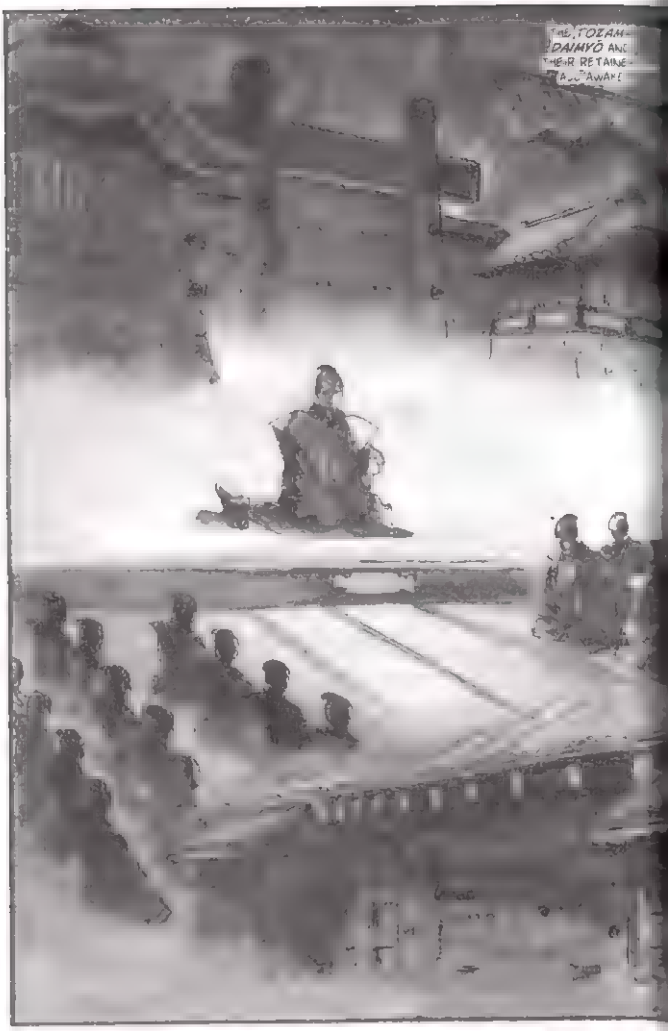
*SOUTHERN *MACHI-BUGYŌSHO*

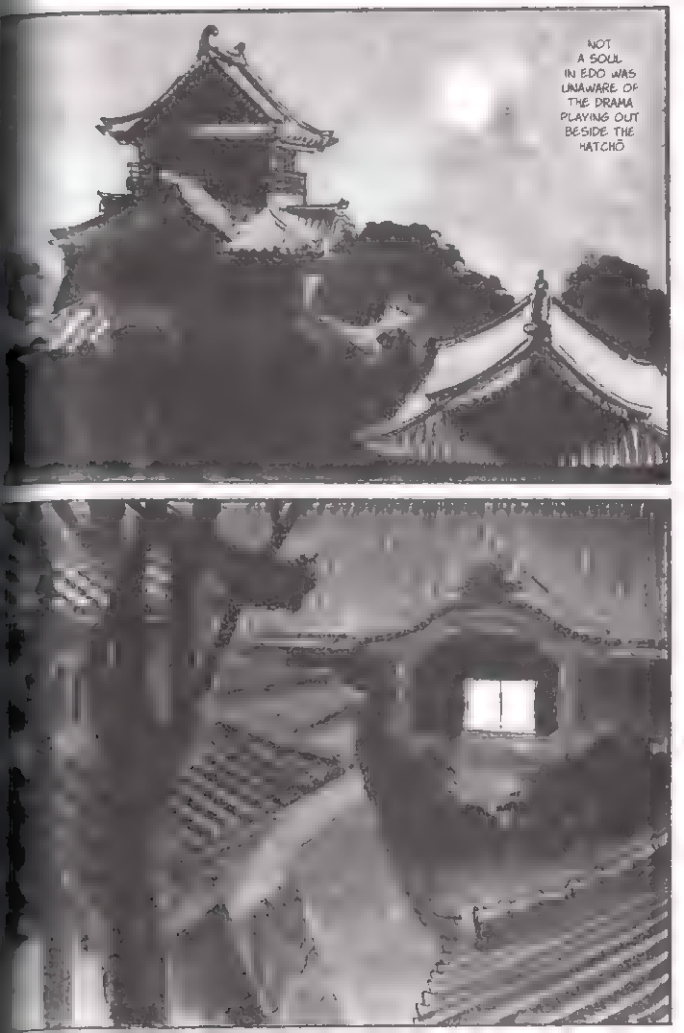
南町奉行所

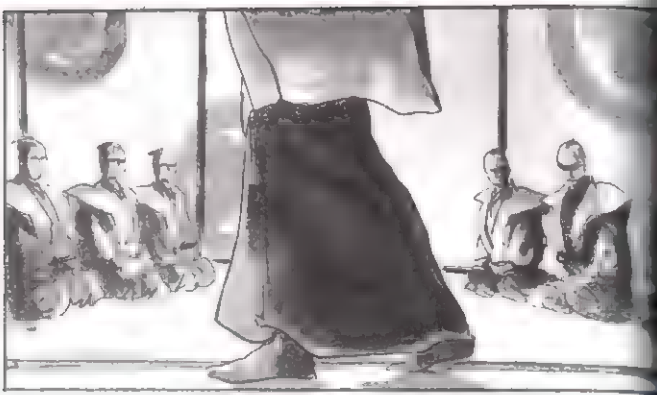
THE STREETS WERE EMPTY BUT IN EVERY HOUSE WITH EYES AND EARS THAT COULD NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR
THE PEOPLE FOLLOWED TURN ON THE STRAND
*SOUTHERN MACHI-BUGYOSHO
南町奉行所
*NORTHERN MACHI-BUGYOSHO
北町奉

THE PEOPLE
FOLLOWED
TURN ON THE
STRAND
北
町
奉
"NORTHERN
MACHI-
BUGYOSHO

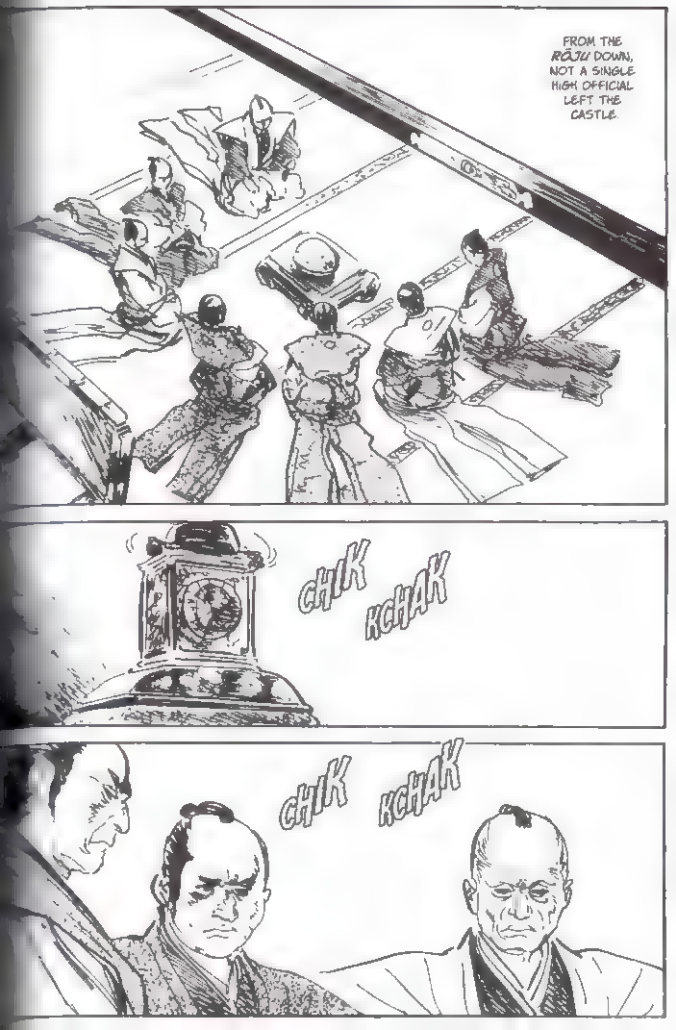
THE MACH-
BUGYÖSHC
WERE READ
TO MOVE
AN INSTAN


TOZAN
DAIMYO AND
RETAINE
AWAY!


NOT A SOUL IN EDO WAS UNAWARE OF THE DRAMA PLAYING OUT BESIDE THE HATCHŌ



THE
SHŌGUN
WAS NO
EXCEPTION


FROM THE RŌJU DOWN, NOT A SINGLE HIGH OFFICIAL LEFT THE CASTLE.
CHIK KCHAK
CHIK KCHAK

ALL EDO, FROM HIGH TO LOW, WAITED AS THOUGH TURNED TO STONE.
NONE WILLING TO RISK THE FIRST MOVE.
SHAK
FIRST, THE PEOPLE FROM THE THUNDER OF EXPLOSIVES ECHOING FROM THE HATCH AND THE TALES OF RETURNING POLICEMEN THEY INSTANTLY GRASPED WHAT WAS GOING ON..

AND
OR RACED
GH THE
UKE
FIRE.

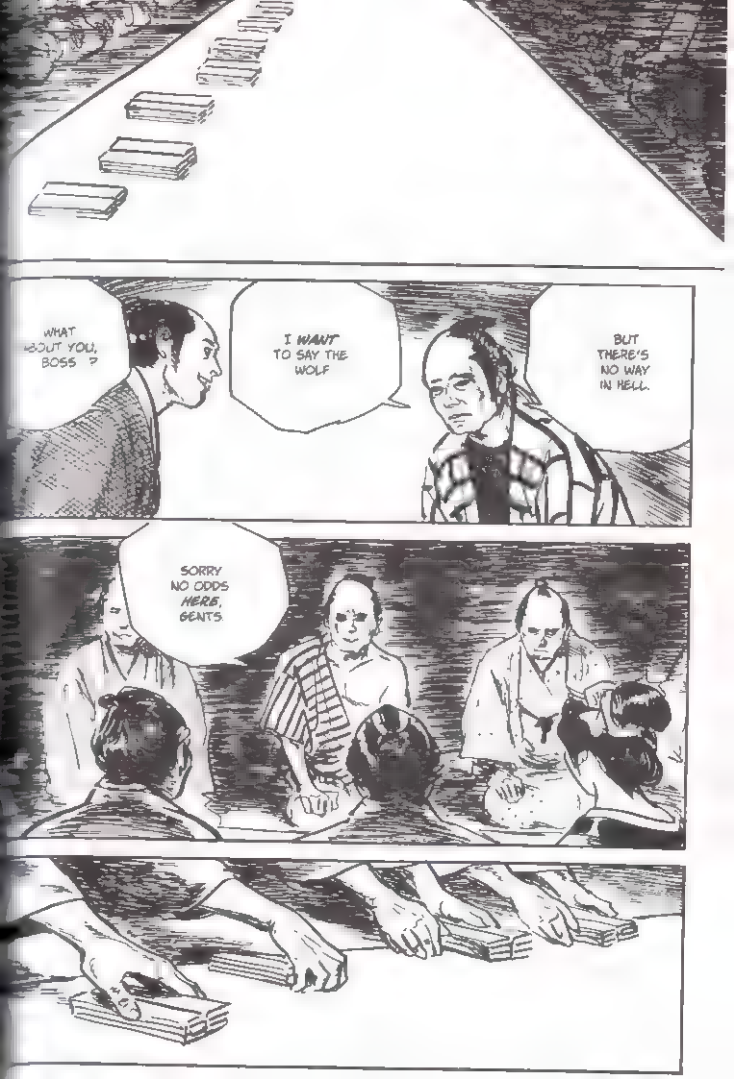
WHO'S GONNA WIN ?
YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ OF COURSE
YEAH. HE'S GOT TWO HUNDRED GUYS!
COME ON- A HUNDRED, AT MOST
AND ŌGAMI ITTŌ. JUST ONE WOLF .
DON'T BE STUPID THE KID IS JUST GOING TO GET IN THE WAY

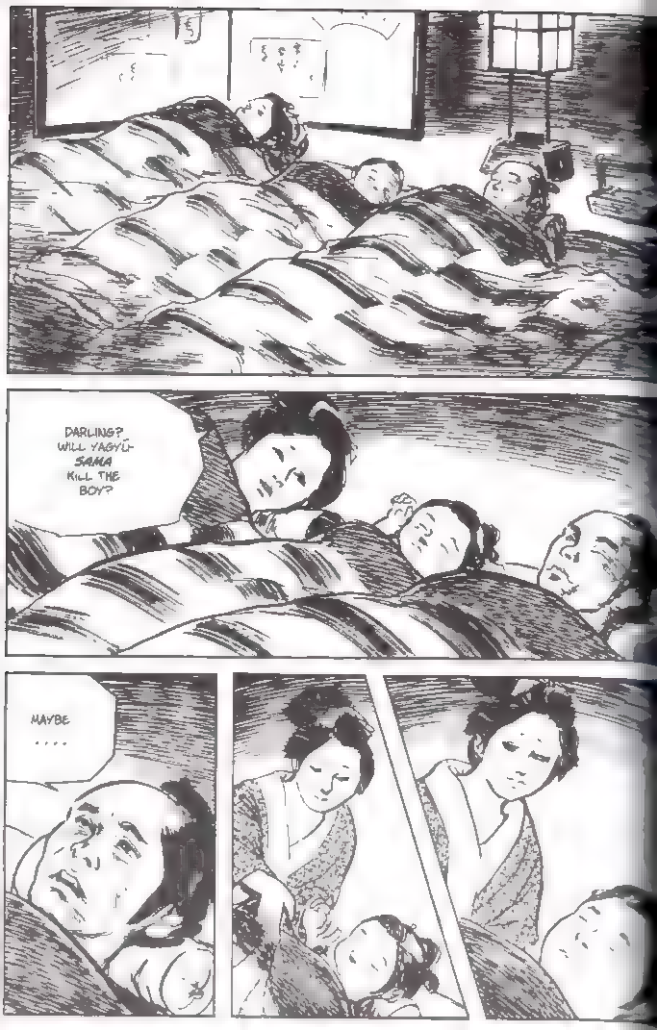
YAGYŪ BY A *MILE*.
A HUNDRED SWORD MASTERS FROM HIS CLAN. BOMB-THROWING *NINJA*... *FORGET* IT
IT'S NO CONTEST
I DON'T KNOW, PAL WE'RE TALKING *LONE WOLF* HERE.

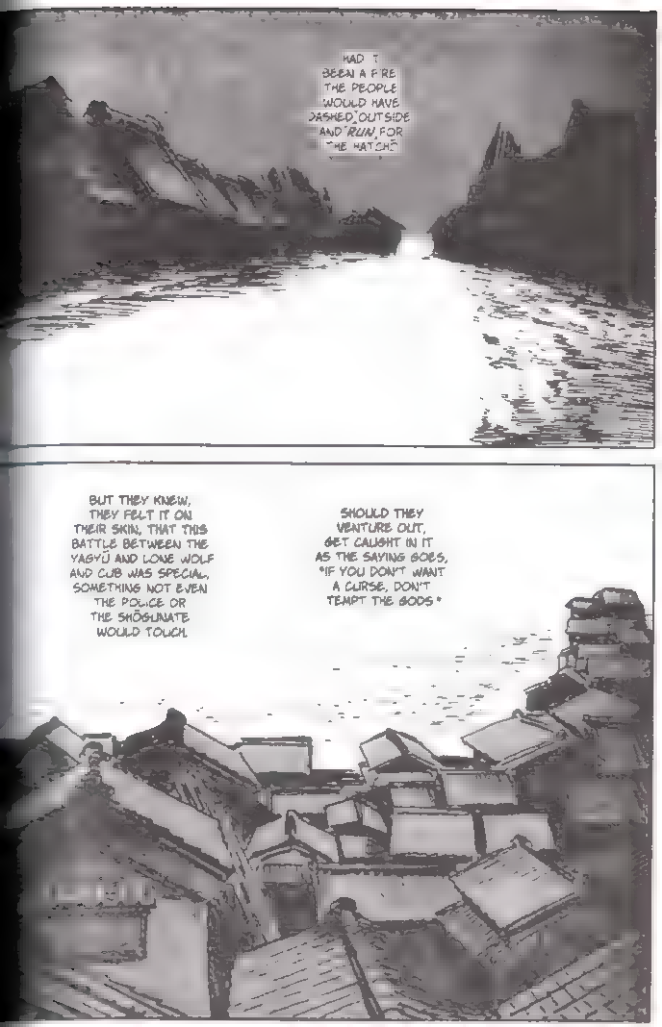
YAGYŪ BY A MILE.
A HUNDRED SWORD MASTERS FROM HIS CLAN BOMB-THROWING NINJA .. FORGET IT
IT'S NO CONTEST
I DON'T KNOW, PAL WE'RE TALKING LONE WOLF HERE
OLD YAGYŪ'S TRIED TO NAIL HIM BEFORE, WHAT A HUNDRED TIMES?
BUT HE CAN'T KILL THE WOLF!
HMM. I GOT SOLD ALL OVER?
MAYBE BUT WHO?
I WONDER

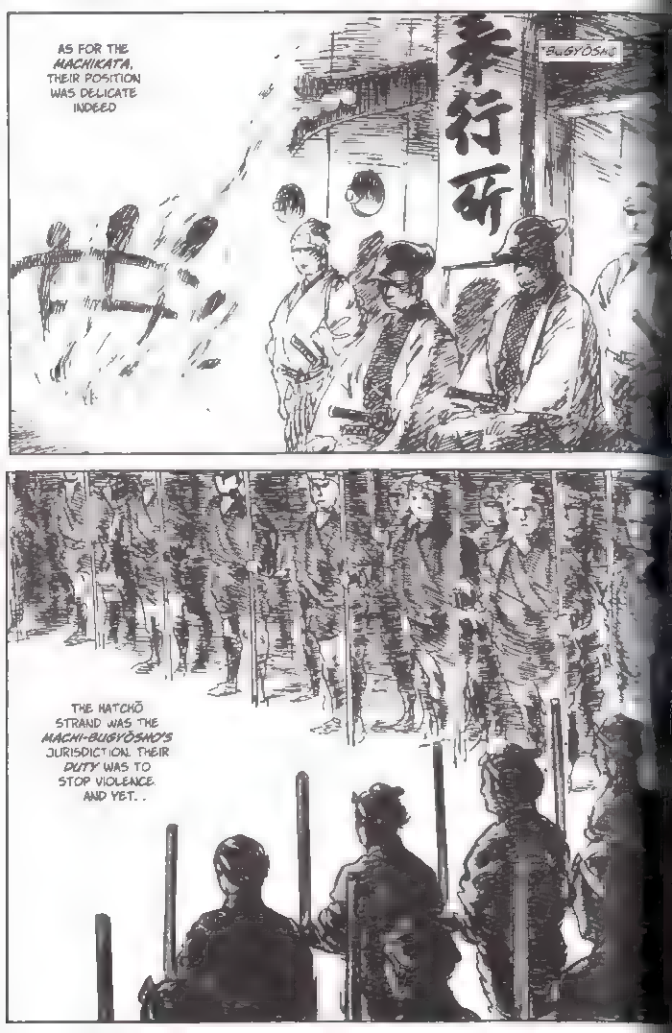
OLD YAGYÜ'S TRIED TO NAIL 'IM BEFORE. WHAT A HUNDRED TIMES?
BUT HE CAN'T KILL THE WOLF!
HMM. I GOT JUST ALL OVER ?
MAYBE BUT WHO ?
I WONDER.

PLACE YOUR BETS, FOLKS?
ALL ON YAGYU-SAMA
ME, TOO
I'M IN.
ANY FOR LONE WOLF ?


WHAT ABOUT YOU, BOSS ?
I WANT TO SAY THE WOLF
BUT THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL.
SORRY NO ODDS HERE, GENTS.

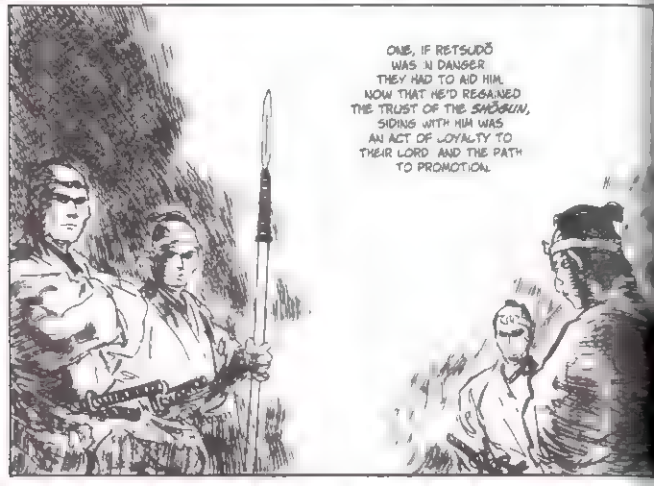

DARLING? WILL YAGYŪ-SAMA KILL THE BOY?
MAYBE ....


HAD IT BEEN A FIRE THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE DASHED OUTSIDE AND RUN FOR THE HATCHES
BUT THEY KNEW, THEY FELT IT ON THEIR SKIN, THAT THIS BATTLE BETWEEN THE YAGYŪ AND LONE WOLF AND CUB WAS SPECIAL, SOMETHING NOT EVEN THE POLICE OR THE SHŌGUNATE WOULD TOUCH.
SHOULD THEY VENTURE OUT, GET CAUGHT IN IT AS THE SAYING GOES, "IF YOU DON'T WANT A CURSE, DON'T TEMPT THE GODS."


AS FOR THE *MACHIKATA*, THEIR POSITION WAS DELICATE INDEED
"BUGYŌSHO"
THE HATCHŌ STRAND WAS THE *MACHI-BUGYŌSHO'S* JURISDICTION. THEIR *DUTY* WAS TO STOP VIOLENCE. AND YET. .

ER POWER OF ARREST STOPPED
SAMURAI FAMILIES RŌNIN OR NO,
SAMI ITTŌ WAS A SAMURAI
SYŪ RETSUDŌ WAS A JIKISAN,
ECT RETAINER OF THE SHŌGUN
HE MACHIKATA COULD ONLY
WATCH FROM AFAR.
'GO-YŌ
御用
御用
御用
御用
SHOULD THE FIGHTING
HURT THE INNOCENT,
THEN THEY COULD INTERVENE.
BUT THAT WAS UNLIKELY
AND RETSUDŌ HIMSELF HAD
WARNED THEM AWAY

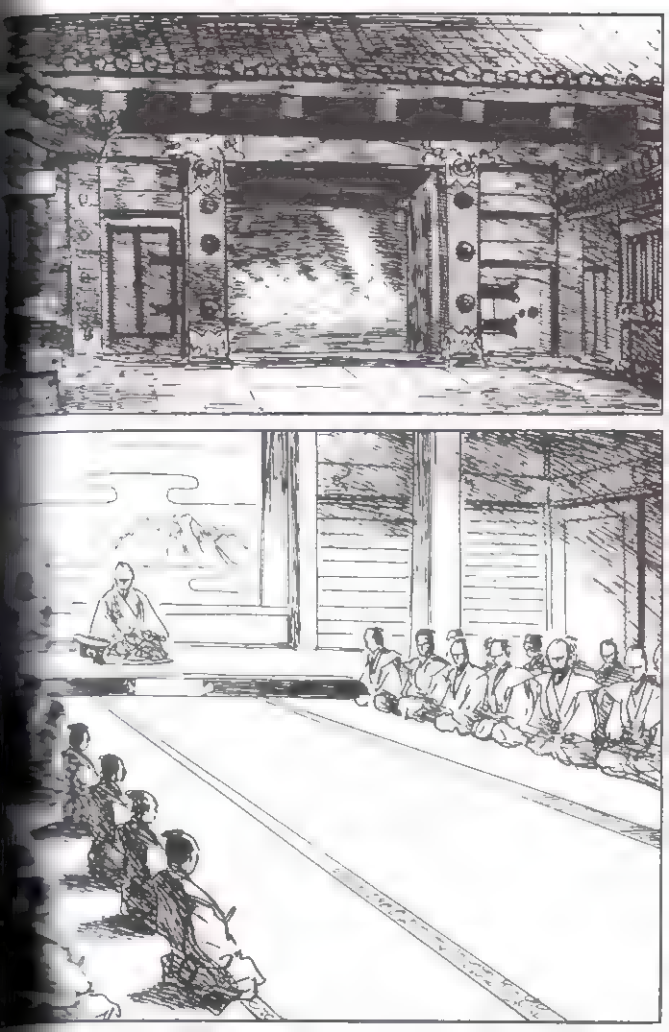
THE JIKISAN HATAMOTO HAD THREE CONCERNS

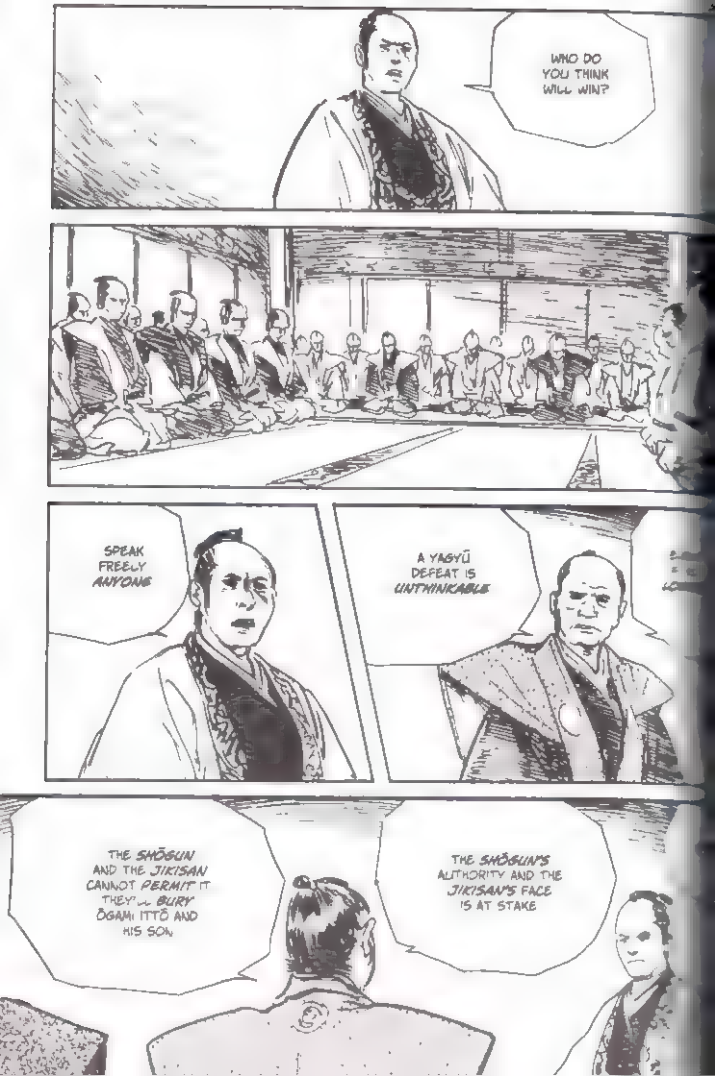

ONE, IF RETSUDÔ WAS IN DANGER THEY HAD TO AID HIM. NOW THAT HE'D REGAINED THE TRUST OF THE SHÔGUN, SIDING WITH HIM WAS AN ACT OF LOYALTY TO THEIR LORD AND THE PATH TO PROMOTION.

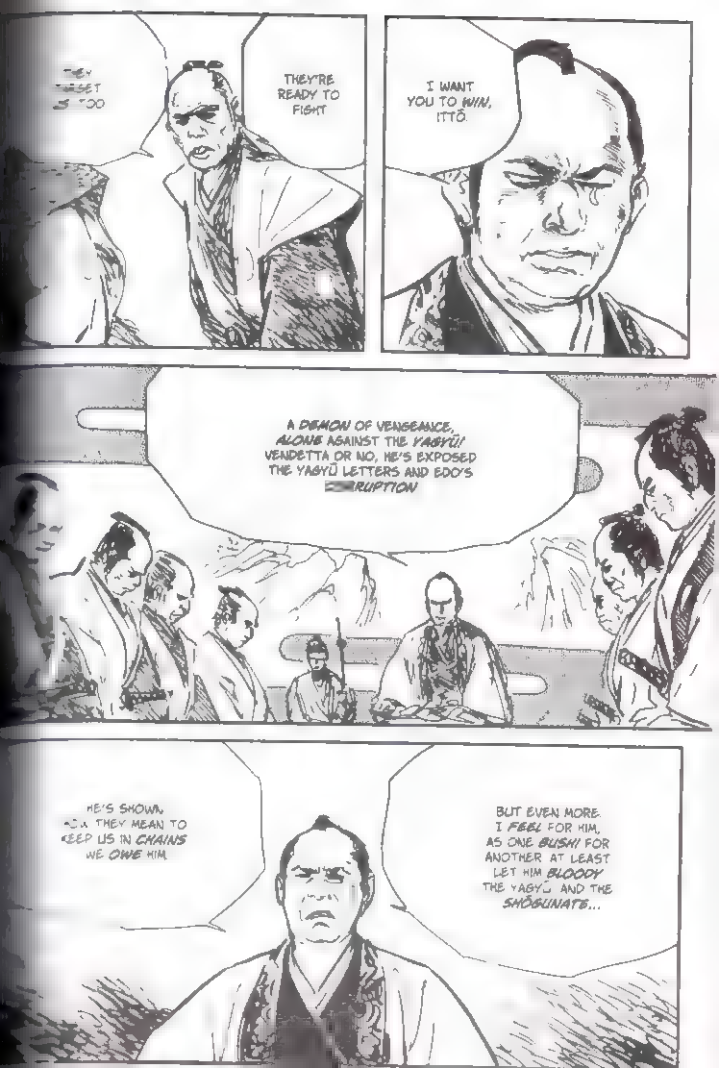
SECOND THEY NEEDED TO CHECK THE *TOZAMA DAIMYŌ*
WITH THE YASYŪ LETTERS AN OPEN SECRET, THE TRUE ROLE OF THE YASYŪ AND THE URA-YASYŪ WAS UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY
THE *TOZAMA'S* RESENTMENT AND SUSPICION TOWARD THE SHŌGUNATE MOUNTED BY THE DAY AND WITH IT, SYMPATHY FOR ŌGAMI. THE *HATAMOTO* HAD TO BLOCK ANY *DAIMYŌ* THAT BACKED ŌGAMI, AND TOOK UP ARMS AGAINST THE *SHŌGUN*

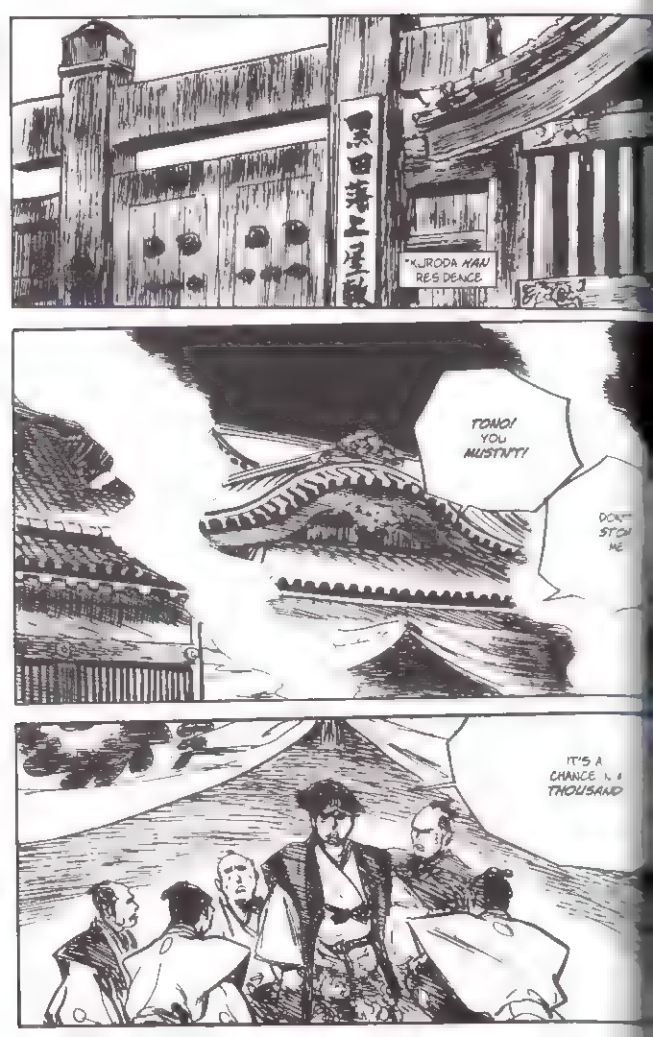
NONE COULD KNOW IF THE SHŌGUN WOULD RIDE FOR THE HATCHO BUT IF HE DID THEY DAREN'T NOT BE AT HIS SIDE.

AND THUS THE COMPOUNDS OF THE MATAMOTO THAT NIGHT WERE LIKE ENCAMPMENTS BEFORE A BATTLE




WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN?
SPEAK FREELY ANYONE
A YAGYŪ DEFEAT IS UNTHINKABLE
THE SHŌGUN AND THE JIKISAN CANNOT PERMIT IT THEY'LL BURY ŌGAMI ITTŌ AND HIS SON
THE SHŌGUN'S AUTHORITY AND THE JIKISAN'S FACE IS AT STAKE


THEY'RE TOO
THEY'RE READY TO FIGHT
I WANT YOU TO WIN, ITTŌ.
A DEMON OF VENGEANCE, ALONE AGAINST THE YAGYŪ! VENDETTA OR NO, HE'S EXPOSED THE YAGYŪ LETTERS AND EDO'S RUPTION
HE'S SHOWN HOW THEY MEAN TO KEEP US IN CHAINS WE OWE HIM
BUT EVEN MORE I FEEL FOR HIM, AS ONE BUSHI FOR ANOTHER AT LEAST LET HIM BLOODY THE YAGYŪ AND THE SHŌGUNATE...


KURODA HAN
RESIDENCE
TONO! YOU MUST NOT!
DON'T STOP ME
IT'S A CHANCE IN A THOUSAND

I'M GOING TO THE HATCHÔ! AND IF THOSE DAMN JIKISAN HELP THE YABYÛ, WE'LL STOP THEM! LET THE WHOLE WORLD SEE KURODA BUSHIDÔ!

I SAID DON'T STOP ME!

YOU MUSTN'T, SIR!

MY LORD! THINK AGAIN!

WE'LL REVEAL ONCE AND FOR ALL HOW THE YAGYŪ *SPY* AND *SCHEME!* IF *WE* RIDE, THE *MAN* WILL RUSH TO OUR SIDE!

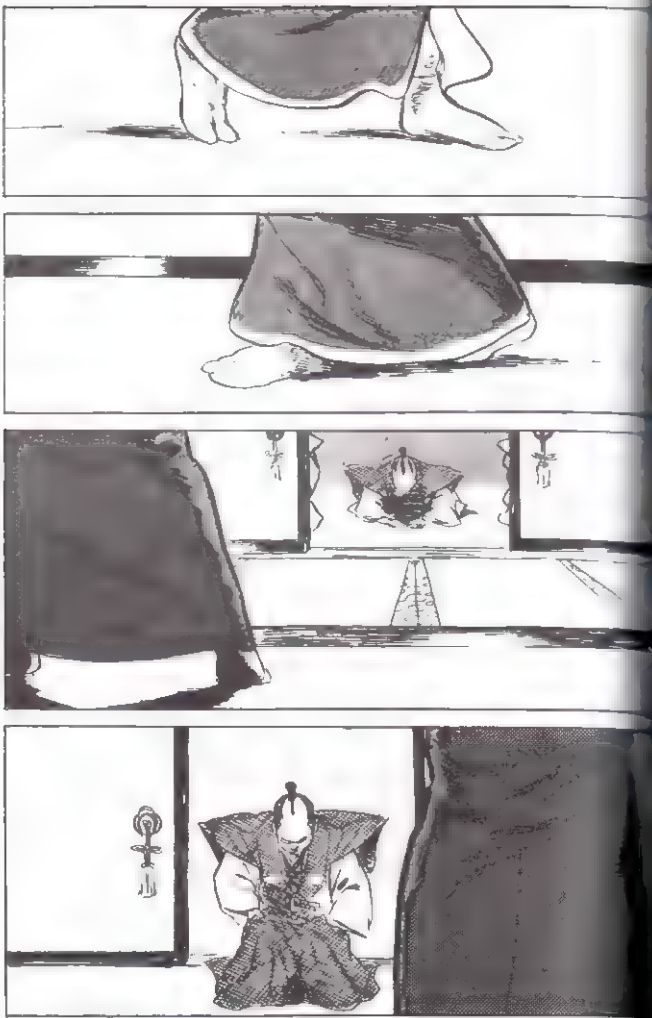
THE *SHŌGUN* WILL BACK DOWN. HE'LL *HAVE* TO LOOSEN HIS HOLD!

I WANT TO HELP YOU TO *WIN!*

ŌGAMI *ITTŌ!* DO NOT *DIE!*

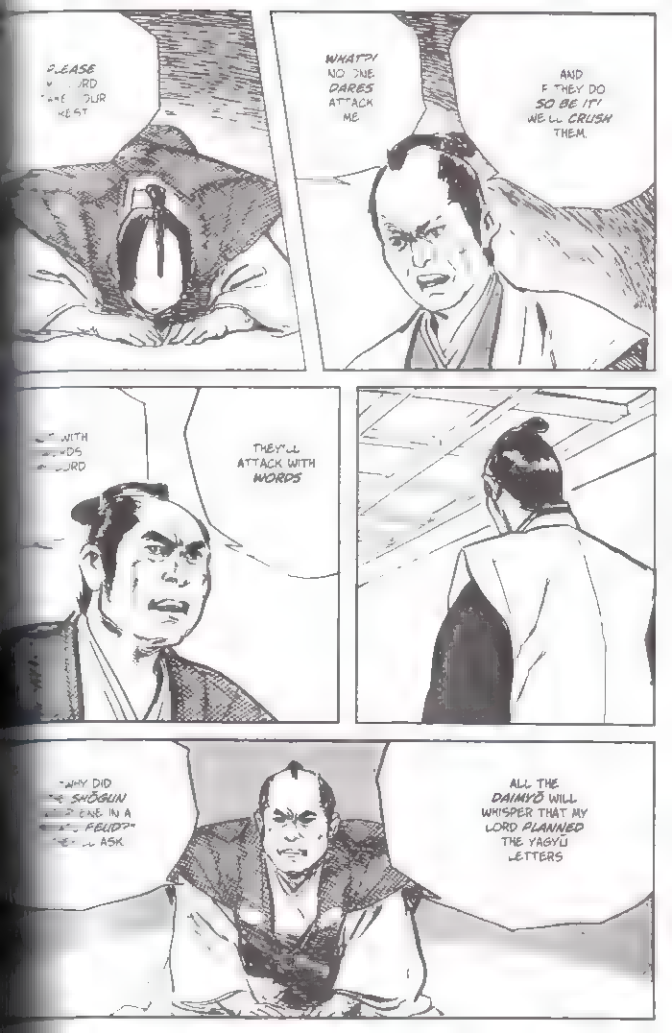
WELL AWARE OF THE *DAIMYŌ'S* RAGE [illegible] AND *PARALYZED* WEIGHING EVERY MOVE

THE SHŌGUN AS WELL.
- HE HOPED SIKISAN WOULD ...E AND THE ...ZAMA, TOO
TRAPPED AS THE DEADLOCKED EDO NIGHT WORE ON.
SET ...E MACHI-BUGYŌ!



HOW GOES THE SCENE AT THE HATCHŌ?
SPEAK! DON'T YOU HAVE SPIES?!
I HUMBLY BEG MY LORD TO GO PEACEFULLY TO BED
WHAT ...?!

AS MY LORD WELL KNOWS, UNTIL HE SLEEPS THE GŌ-ROJŪ AND THE JIKISAN STAY ON HIGH ALERT
FULLY ARMED READY TO RIDE
THE TOZAMA DAIMYŌ KNOW IT IF MY LORD GOES TO THE HATCHŌ THEY'LL TRY TO STOP HIM. THE SITUATION IS A TINDERBOX
BUT IF MY LORD SLEEPS, THE GŌ-ROJŪ LEAVE THE JIKISAN STANDING DOWN AND THE DAIMYŌ WATCH IN SILENCE


PLEASE
WHAT?! NO ONE DARES ATTACK ME.
AND IF THEY DO SO BE IT! WE'LL CRUSH THEM.
WITH
THEY'LL ATTACK WITH WORDS
"WHY DID THE SHŌGUN CAUSE IN A FEUD?" WILL ASK
ALL THE DAIMYŌ WILL WHISPER THAT MY LORD PLANNED THE YAGYŪ LETTERS

THEY'LL DEMAND TO KNOW WHY ŌGAMI WAS DISBARRED, WHY HE FIGHTS YAGYŪ-SAMA IT'S PLAYING WITH FIRE MY LORD
THE DISBARMENTS HAVE THEM ON EDGE— COULD THEY BE NEXT? THEY'LL LATCH ONTO THIS, AND NEVER LET GO.
THE CORNERED RAT ATTACKS THE CAT MY LORD THEY'LL DEMAND YOU WEAKEN CONTROL
HEAR ME, MY LORD, PLEASE, SLEEP

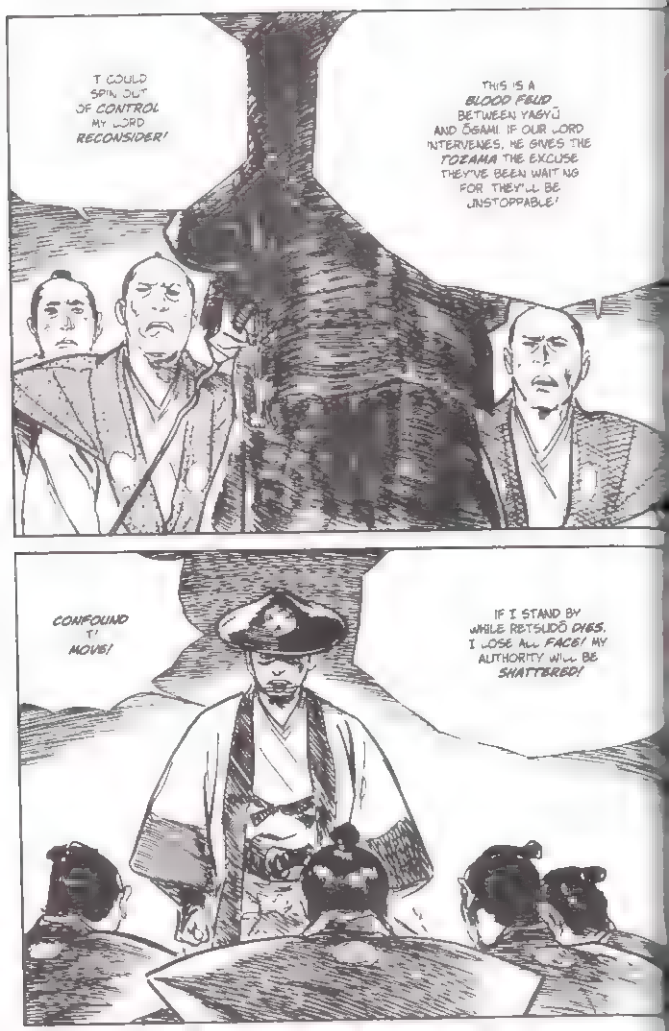
WHAT OF THE MATCHŌ?!
IT'S A PRIVATE FEUD, MY LORD!
TELL ME!!
SO BE IT.
SAMA HAS SLAUGHTERED THE MAGYU'S MEAL.
RETSUDŌ-SAMA STANDS ALONE.
WHAT ...?!

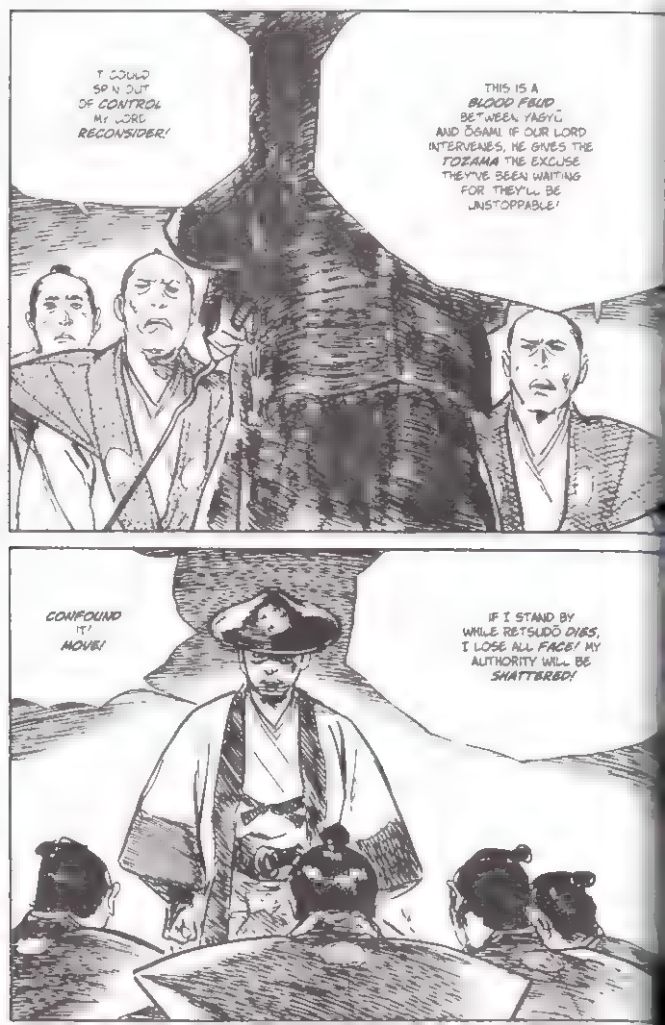
YET MY MEN REPORT THAT ŌGAMI'S SWORD IS BROKEN! BLOOD POURS FROM A MORTAL WOUND. IT'S ALL HE CAN DO TO STAND.
PERHAPS
AND YET
OGAMI WILL NOT FALL! HIS EYES BURN WITH DEMONIC LIGHT!
HE FIGHTS ON WITH A STRENGTH SURPASSING MORTAL MEN. THE BATTLE IS EVEN

MY HORSE!
LORD!
I'M GOING TO THE HATCHO!

THUD
THUD
MY LORD!
I BEG YOU! RECONSIDER!
OUT OF MY WAY!!

SLASH
"THIS WILL NOT STAND MY LORD!"
IF YOU MOVE, THE JIKISAN MOVE, THE DAIMYŌ MOVE!
THE GO-SANKE CLANS RUSH IN. EDO WILL BE IN CHAOS!


IT COULD SPIN OUT OF CONTROL MY LORD RECONSIDER!
THIS IS A BLOOD FEUD BETWEEN YAGYŪ AND ŌGAMI. IF OUR LORD INTERVENES, HE GIVES THE TOZAMA THE EXCUSE THEY'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. THEY'LL BE UNSTOPPABLE!
CONFOUND IT! MOVE!
IF I STAND BY WHILE RETSUDŌ DIES, I LOSE ALL FACE! MY AUTHORITY WILL BE SHATTERED!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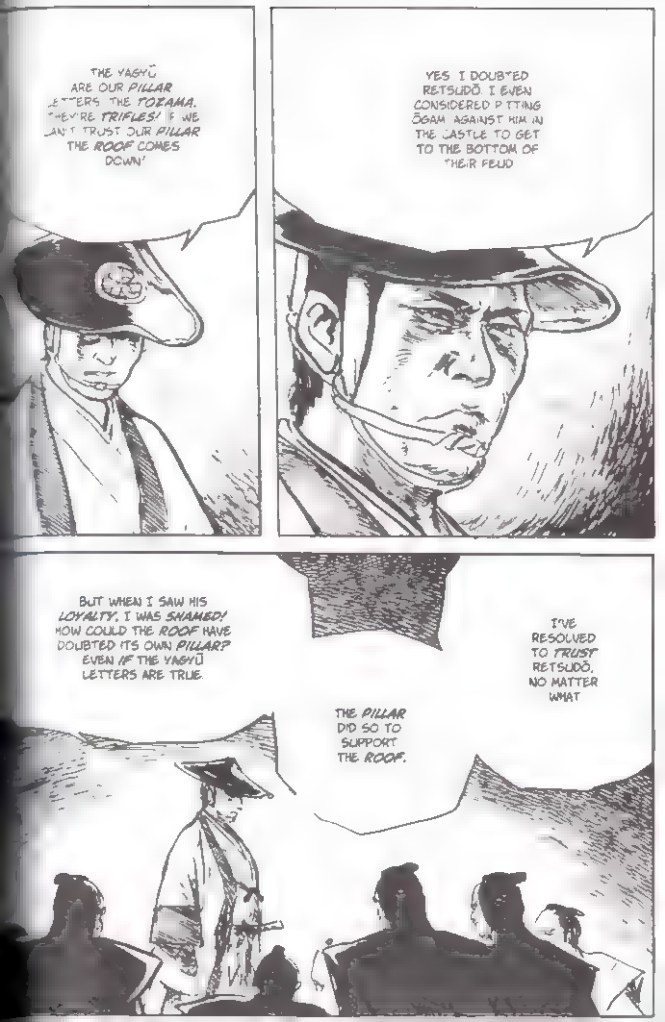
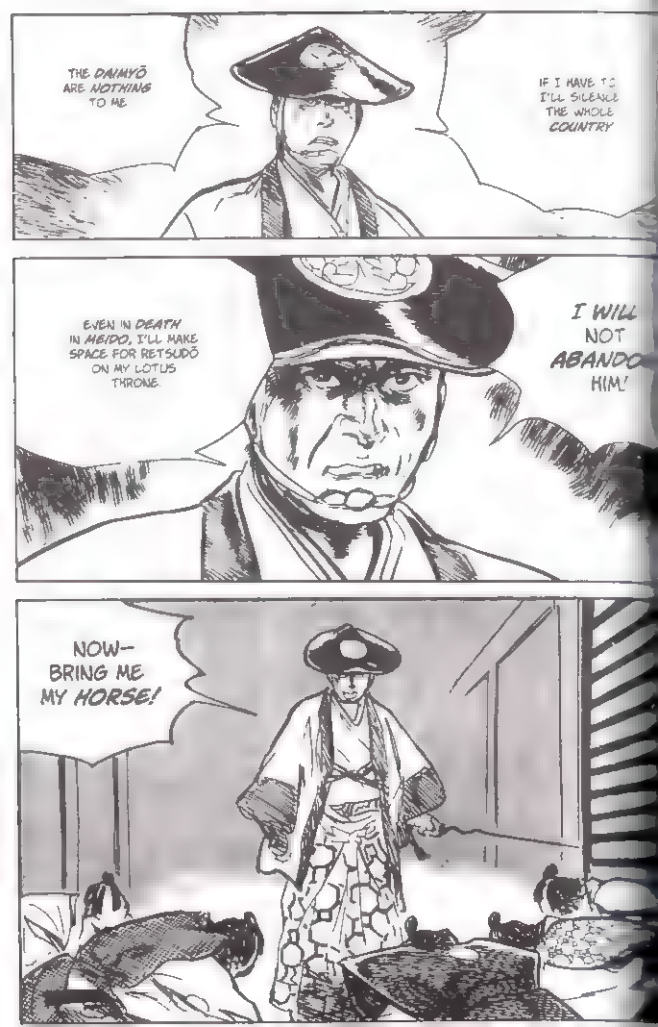
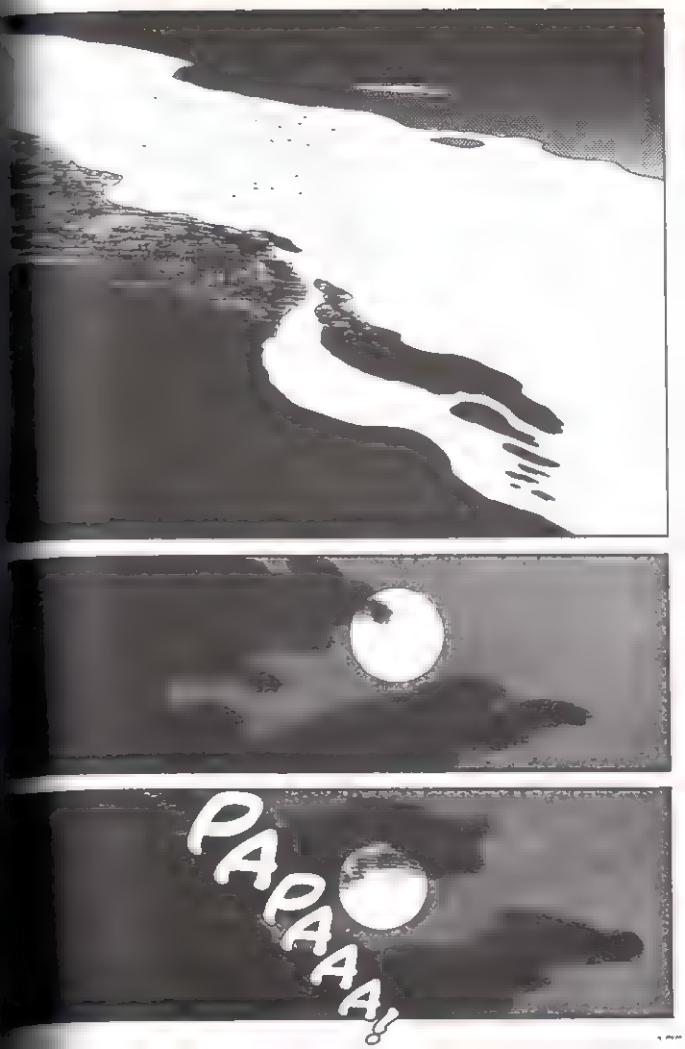
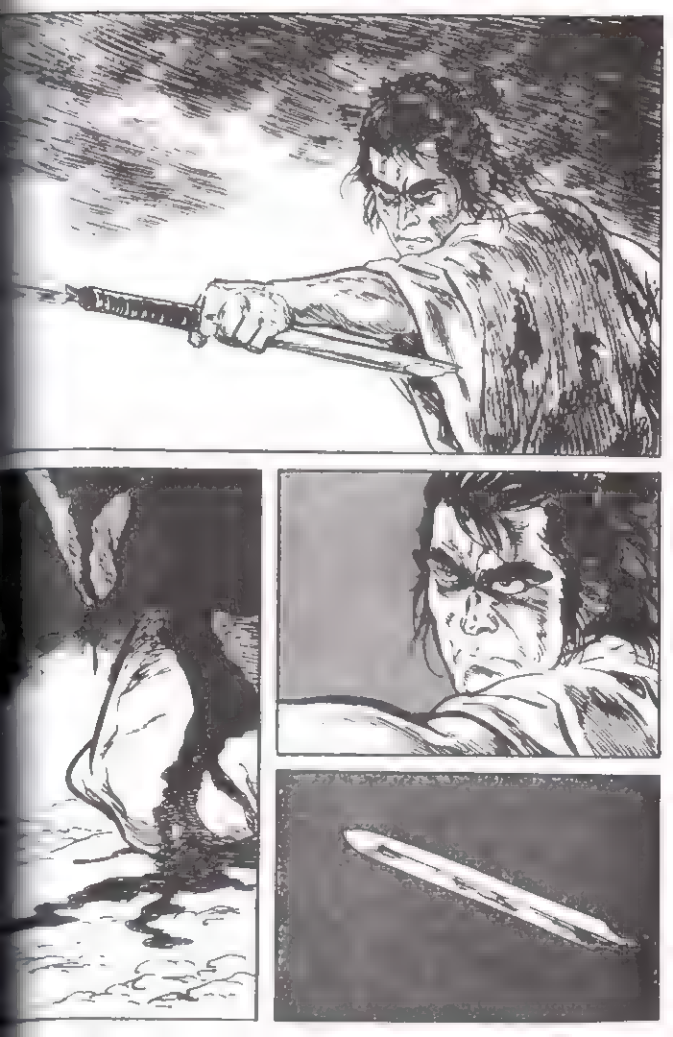
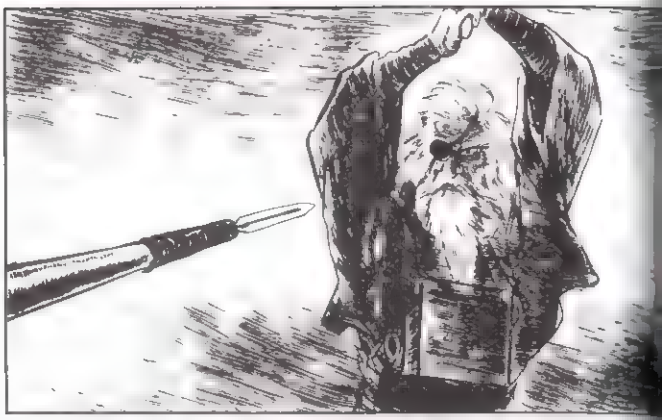

THE YASHÜ ARE OUR PILLAR LETTERS THE TOZAMA. THEY'RE TRIFLES! IF WE CAN'T TRUST OUR PILLAR THE ROOF COMES DOWN!
YES I DOUBTED RETSUDÖ. I EVEN CONSIDERED PITTING ÖGAM AGAINST HIM IN THE CASTLE TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THEIR FEUD
BUT WHEN I SAW HIS LOYALTY, I WAS SHAMED! HOW COULD THE ROOF HAVE DOUBTED ITS OWN PILLAR? EVEN IF THE YASHÜ LETTERS ARE TRUE.
I'VE RESOLVED TO TRUST RETSUDÖ, NO MATTER WHAT
THE PILLAR DID SO TO SUPPORT THE ROOF.


THE DAIMYŌ ARE NOTHING TO ME
IF I HAVE TO I'LL SILENCE THE WHOLE COUNTRY
EVEN IN DEATH IN MEIDO, I'LL MAKE SPACE FOR RETSUDŌ ON MY LOTUS THRONE.
I WILL NOT ABANDON HIM!
NOW— BRING ME MY HORSE!


PAPAAA!

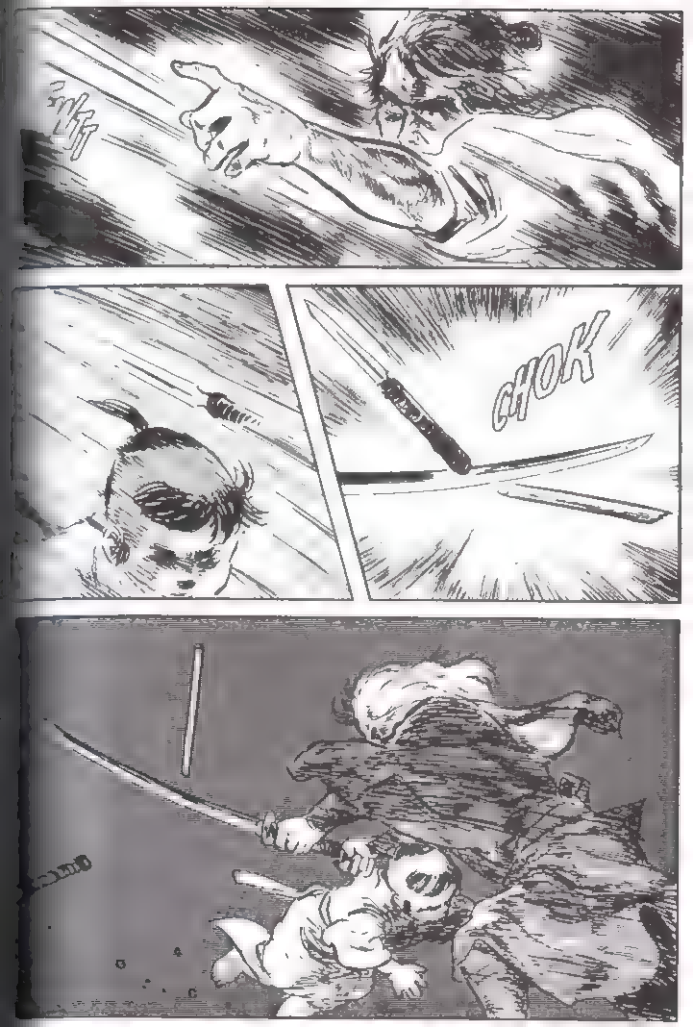


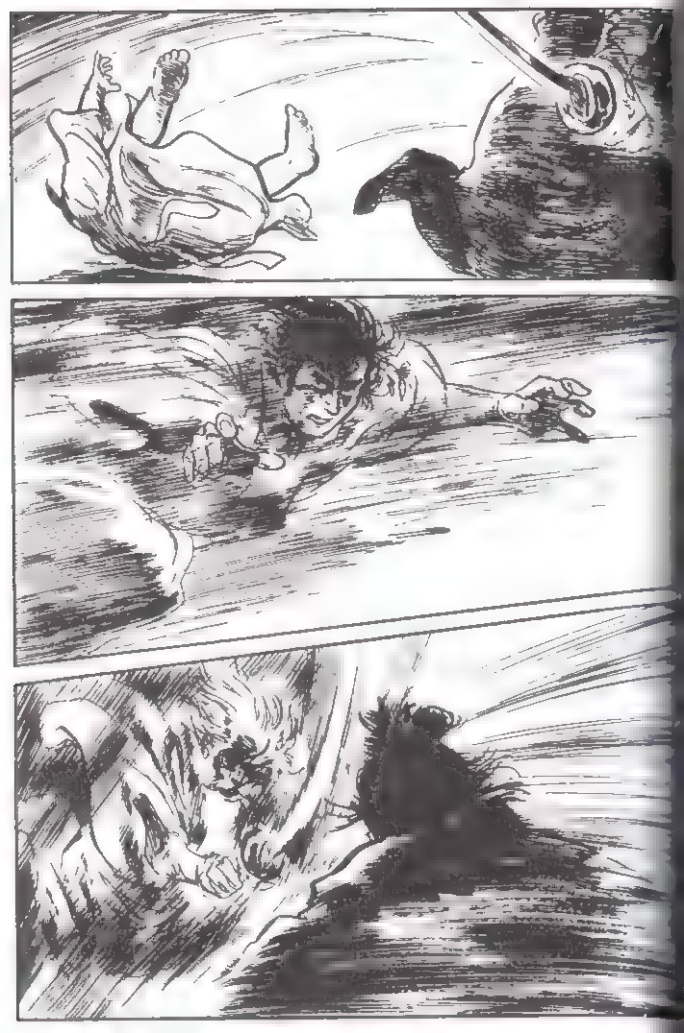


RYAAAAH!

WHSSH

HYAAAAAH!


CHOK



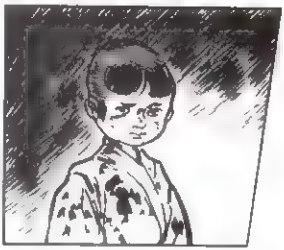
THAP

ITTŌ!
I'M NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD, BUT I HAVE THINGS TO DO!

ITTŌ! I'M NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD, BUT I HAVE THINGS TO DO!
I MUST REPLANT THE TREE YOU UPROOTED! THE PILLAR OF THE TOKUGAWA!
UNTIL THEN, I CAN'T GIVE YOU THIS LIFE!

I MUST REPLANT THE TREE YOU UPROOTED! THE PILLAR OF THE TOKUGAWA!
UNTIL THEN, I CAN'T GIVE YOU THIS LIFE!

GO ON AHEAD, AND SAVE ME A PLACE ON THE LOTUS THRONE! WE'LL SETTLE THIS THERE!
NO, RETSUDŌ! YOU SAVE A PLACE FOR ME!

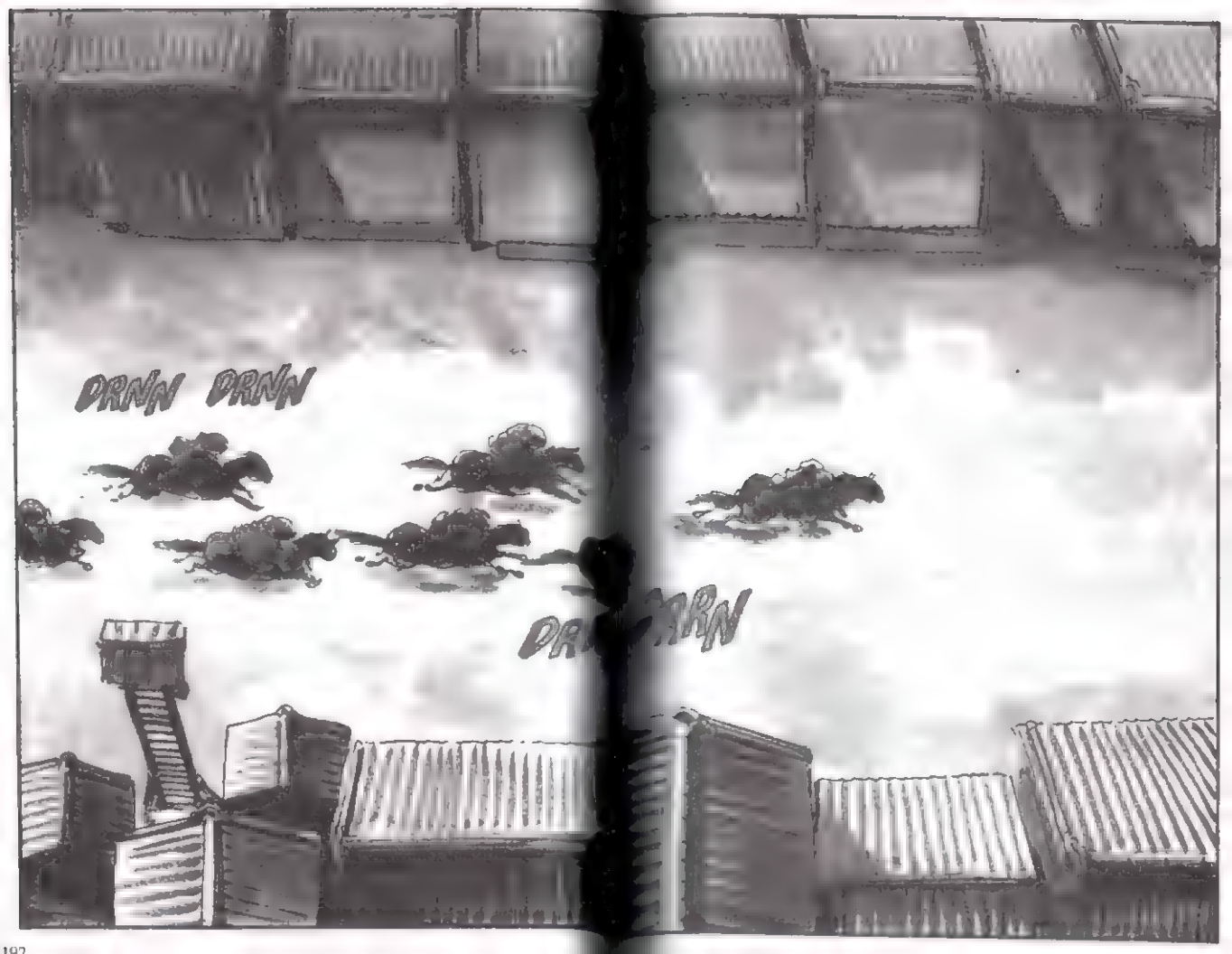


The hundred and forty-first

Empty Stirrups

E SHŌGUN
D MOVED
AST.

DRNN DRNN
DR


DRNN DRNN
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NATURALLY, THE MACHIKATA DEPLOYED IN FORCE

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ZEISAN
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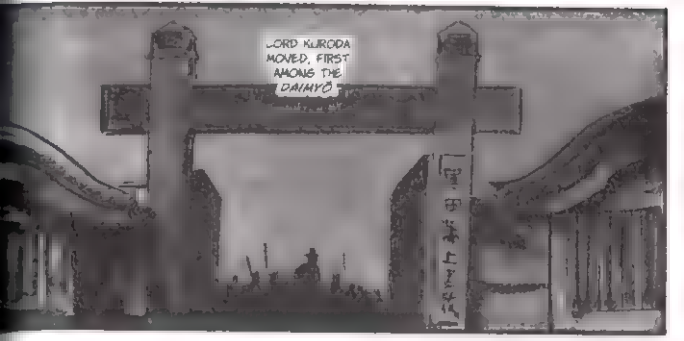
TO THE


LORD KURODA
MOVED, FIRST
AMONG THE
DAIMYŌ

SHIMAZU *NAN* FOLLOWED TO STOP THEM, THE *GO-SANKE* RUSHED FOR THE RIVER

BATTLE WAS WRITTEN IN THE CLOUDS

NRNN
RNN

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THE THINKING OF THE TOZAMA DAIMYO CAME TO THIS—OPPOSE THE SHÔGUN ON THE BANKS OF THE HATCHÔ THE FEUD BETWEEN ÔGAMI AND THE YAGYÛ IS PRIVATE SO WHY SHOULD THE SHÔGUN RIDE ?

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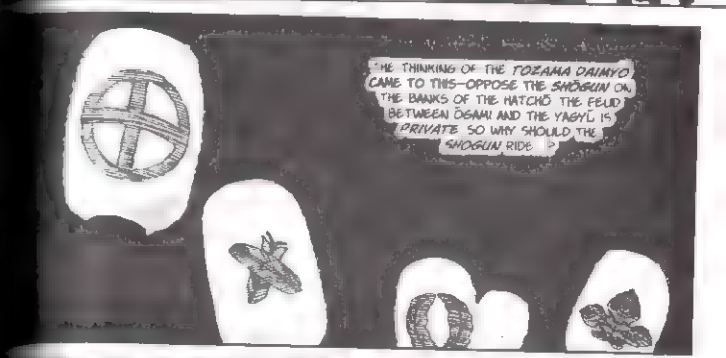
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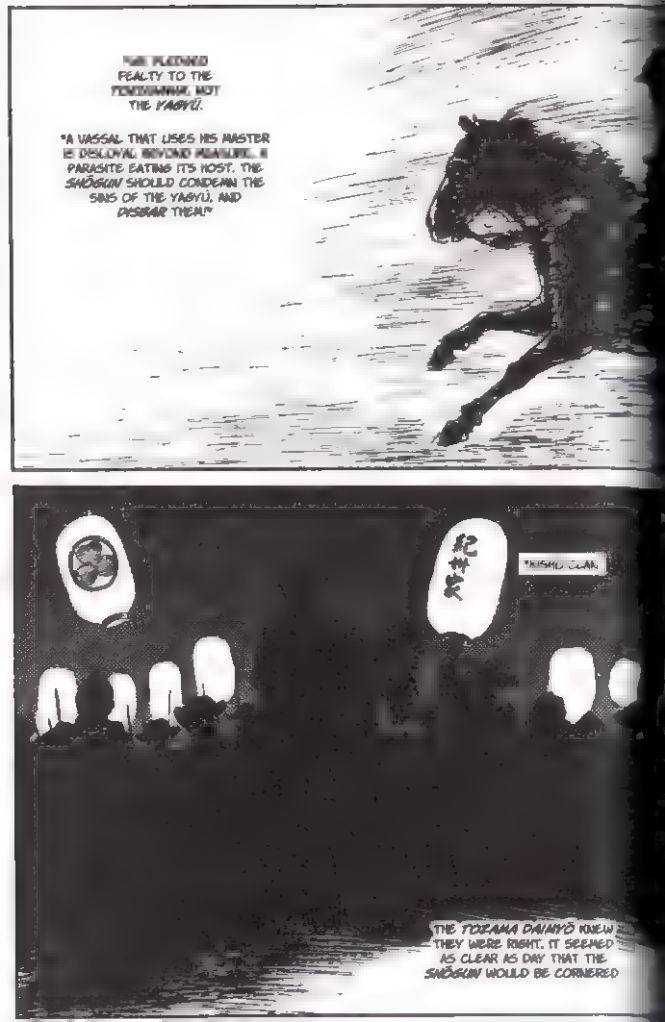
'THE RUMORS ABOUT THE YAGYÜ LETTERS MUST BE TRUE. THE SHÔGUNATE HAS ASKED YAGYÜ RETSUDÔ TO SUPPRESS US'

"HOW DARE THE YAGYÜ, A MERE VASSAL, MAKE HIS MASTER AID HIM IN A PRIVATE FEUD?"

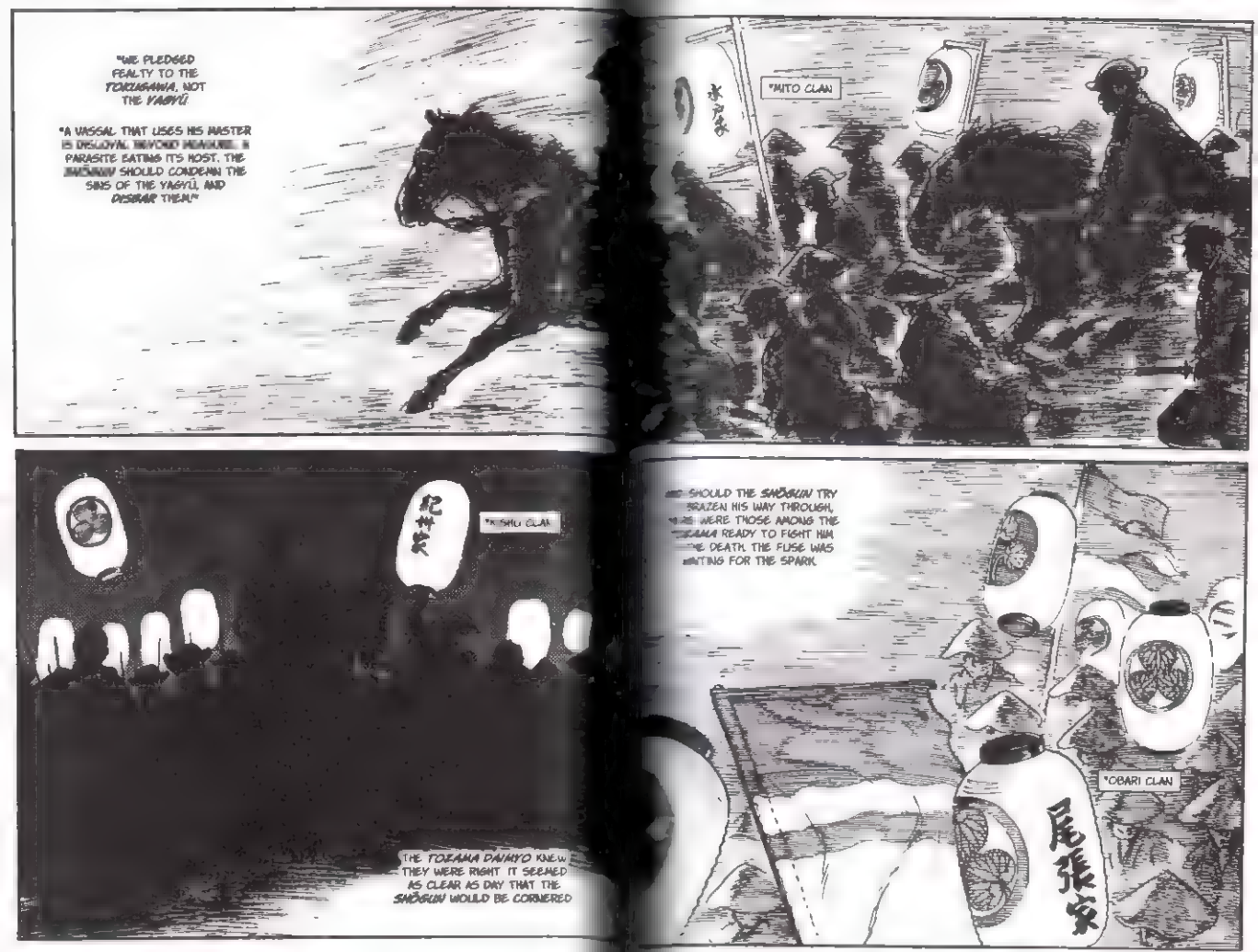
"THE RUMORS ABOUT THE YAGYŪ LETTERS MUST BE *TRUE* THE SHŌGUNATE HAS ASKED YAGYŪ RETSUDŌ TO SUPPRESS US!"
DOES RIDE NOW HIM?
"HOW DARE THE YAGYŪ A MERE VASSAL, MAKE HIS MASTER AND HIM A PRIVATE FEUD?"
"DOES THIS NOT SHOW THAT THE *SHŌGUN* IS NOW THE YAGYŪ'S *PUPPET?*"

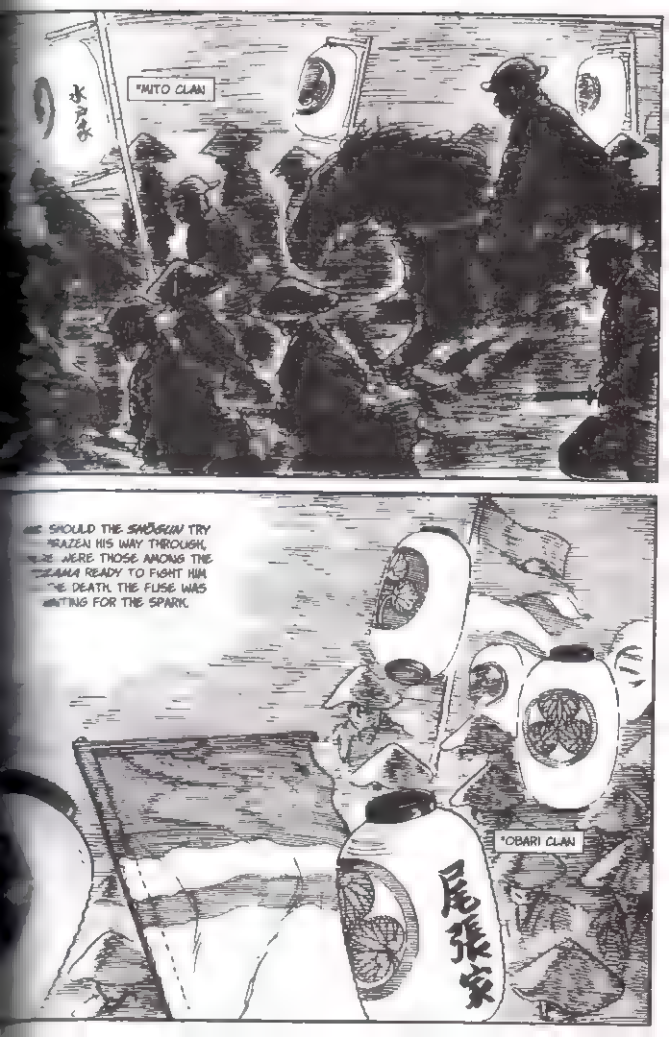
DOES
RIDE NOW
HIM?
"DOES THIS NOT
SHOW THAT THE
OGUN IS NOW
THE YAGYUS
PUPPET?


THE PLEDGED FEALTY TO THE TENNOHEIKA, NOT THE YABYŪ.
"A VASSAL THAT USES HIS MASTER IS DISLOYAL BEYOND MEASURE. A PARASITE EATING ITS HOST. THE SHŌGUN SHOULD CONDEMN THE SINS OF THE YABYŪ, AND DISBAND THEM!"
"RUSHU CLAN."
THE TOZAMA DAIMYŌ KNEW THEY WERE RIGHT. IT SEEMED AS CLEAR AS DAY THAT THE SHŌGUN WOULD BE CORNERED

"WE PLEDGED FEALTY TO THE *TOKUGAWA*, NOT THE *YAGYŪ*.

"A VASSAL THAT USES HIS MASTER IS DISLOYAL BEYOND MEASURE. A PARASITE EATING ITS HOST. THE *SHŌGUN* SHOULD CONDEMN THE SINS OF THE YAGYŪ, AND *DISBAR* THEM."




水戸家
*MITO CLAN
SHOULD THE SHŌGUN TRY
TO BRAZEN HIS WAY THROUGH,
THERE WERE THOSE AMONG THE
DAIMYŌ READY TO FIGHT HIM
TO THE DEATH. THE FUSE WAS
WAITING FOR THE SPARK.
*OBARI CLAN
尾張家

THE SHOGUN'S THINKING WAS THUS...

THOKKA THOKKATA

AND THUS, LOST IN THEIR THOUGHTS, THE SHOGUN AND THE TOZAMA, THE JIKISAN, GO-SANKE, AND MACHIKATA...

永代橋

*EITA BRIDGE

ALL CONVERGED ON THE HATCHŌ STRAND, READY TO EXPLODE INTO BATTLE

THE SHOGUN'S THINKING WAS THUS -

—EVEN IF THE *TOZAMA DAIMYŌ* RODE IN FORCE, THERE WERE NONE AMONG THEM BOLD ENOUGH TO TAKE UP ARMS. HE WOULD FACE THEM DOWN.

THOKKA

THOKKATA

AND THUS, LOST IN THEIR THOUGHTS, THE *SHŌGUN* AND THE *TOZAMA*, THE *JIKISAN GO-SANKE*, AND *MACHIKATA*...

永代橋

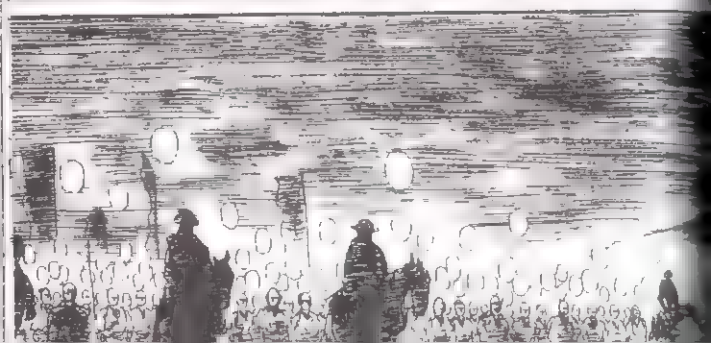
*EITA BRIDGE

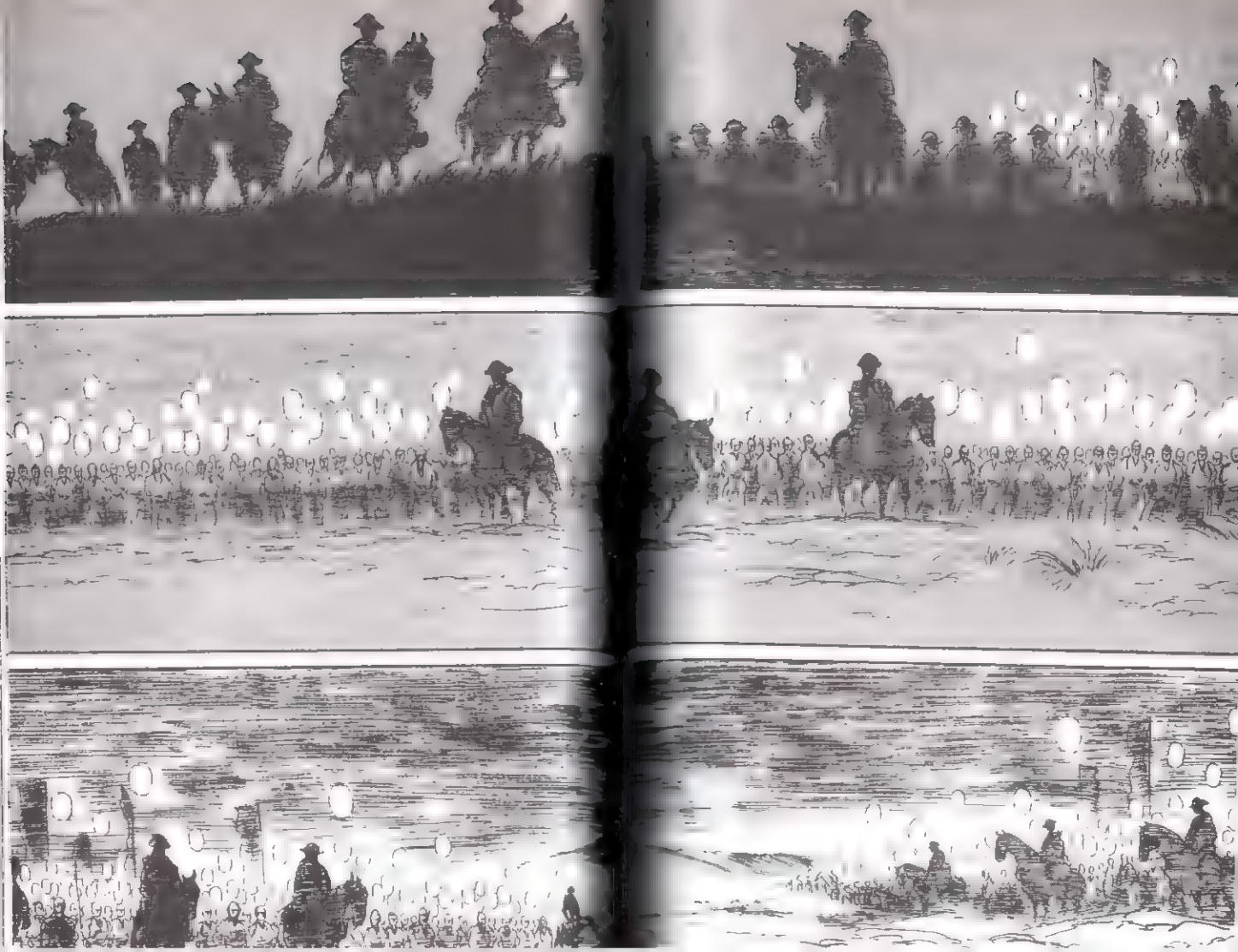
...ALL CONVERGED ON THE HATCHŌ STRAND, READY TO *EXPLODE INTO BATTLE*

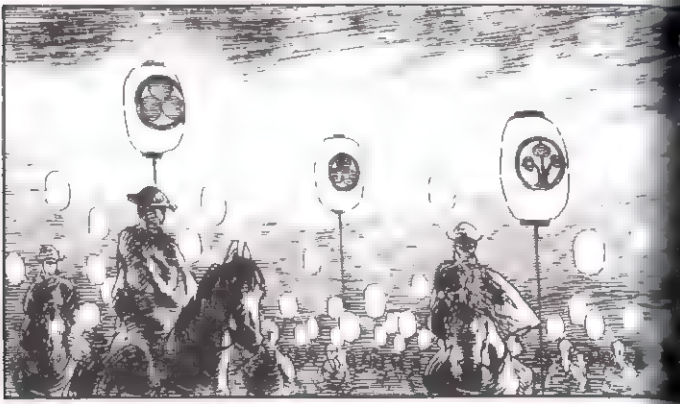
両國橋

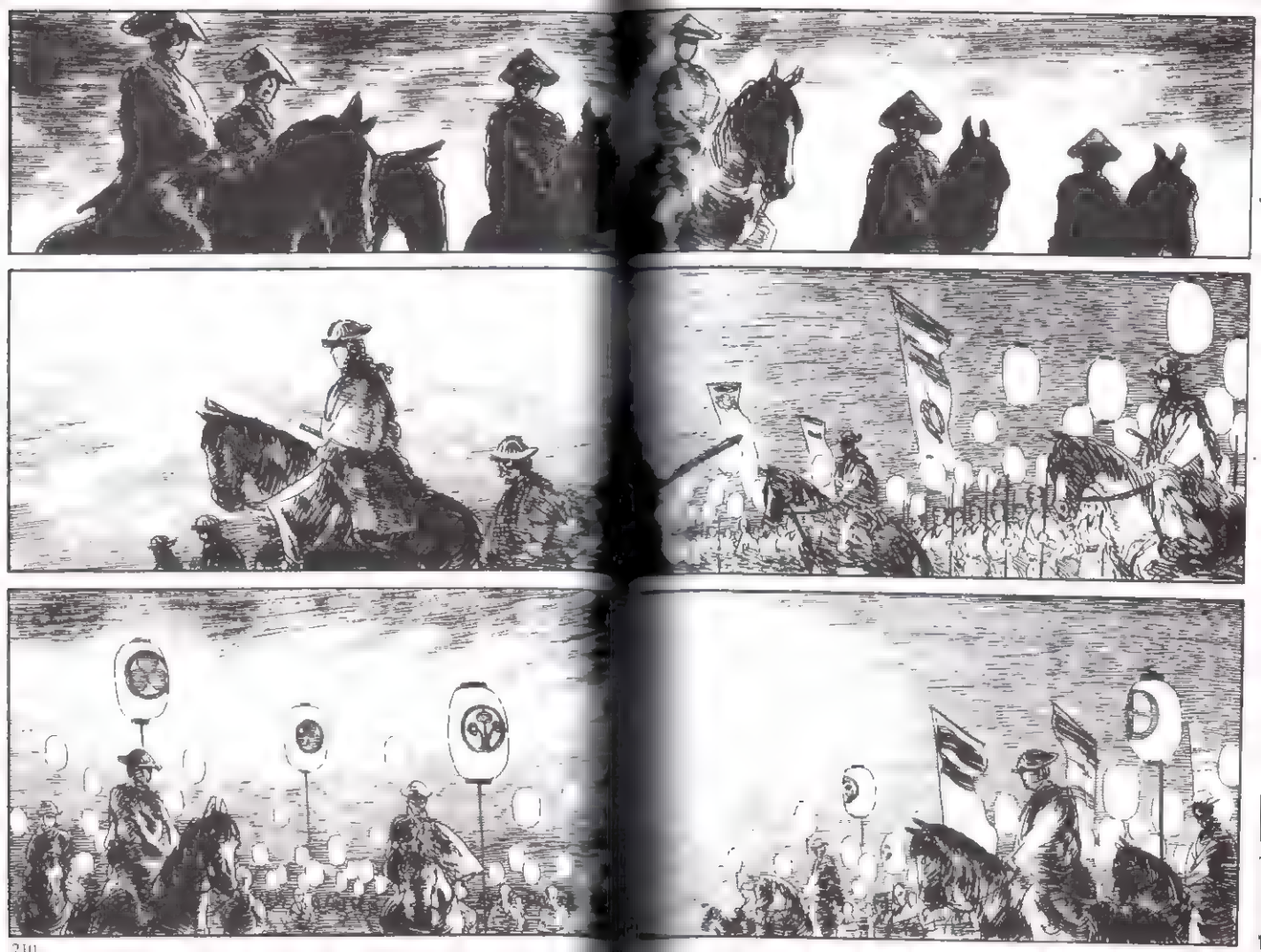
*RYŌGOKU BRIDGE

—EVEN IF THE *TOZAMA DAIMYŌ* RODE IN FORCE, THERE WERE NONE AMONG THEM BOLD ENOUGH TO TAKE UP ARMS. HE WOULD FACE THEM DOWN.

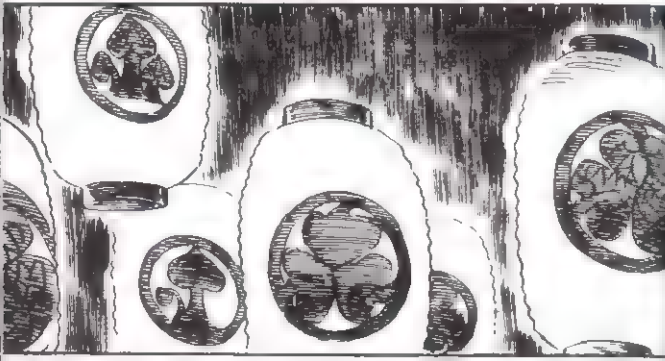




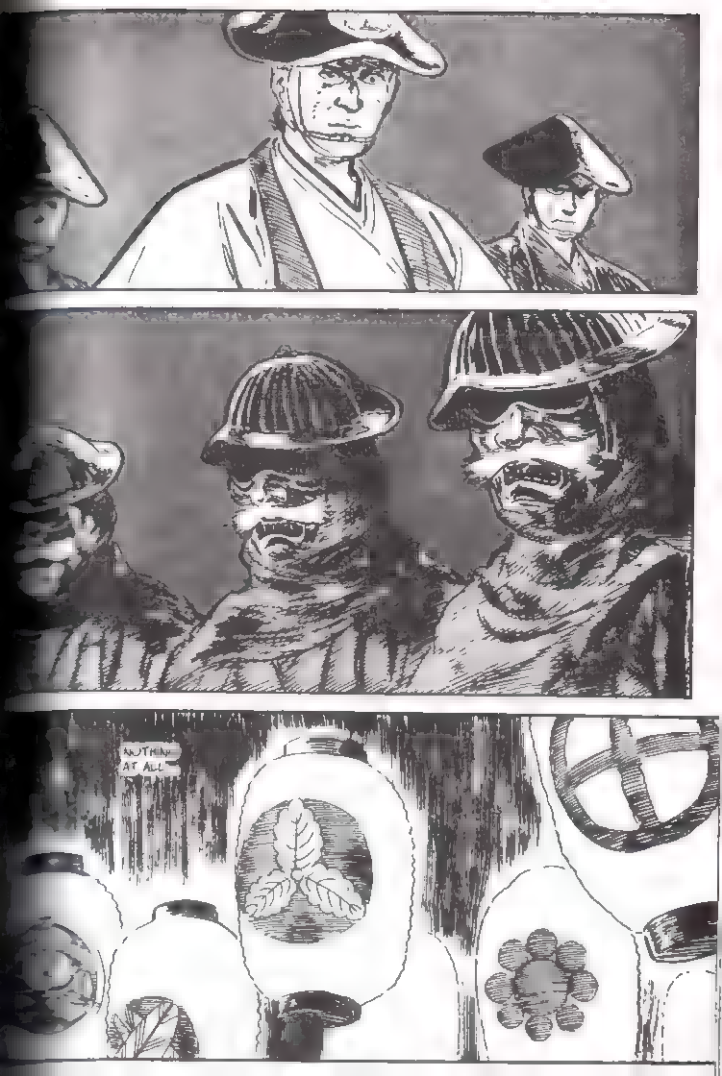




BUT
NOTHING
HAPPENED



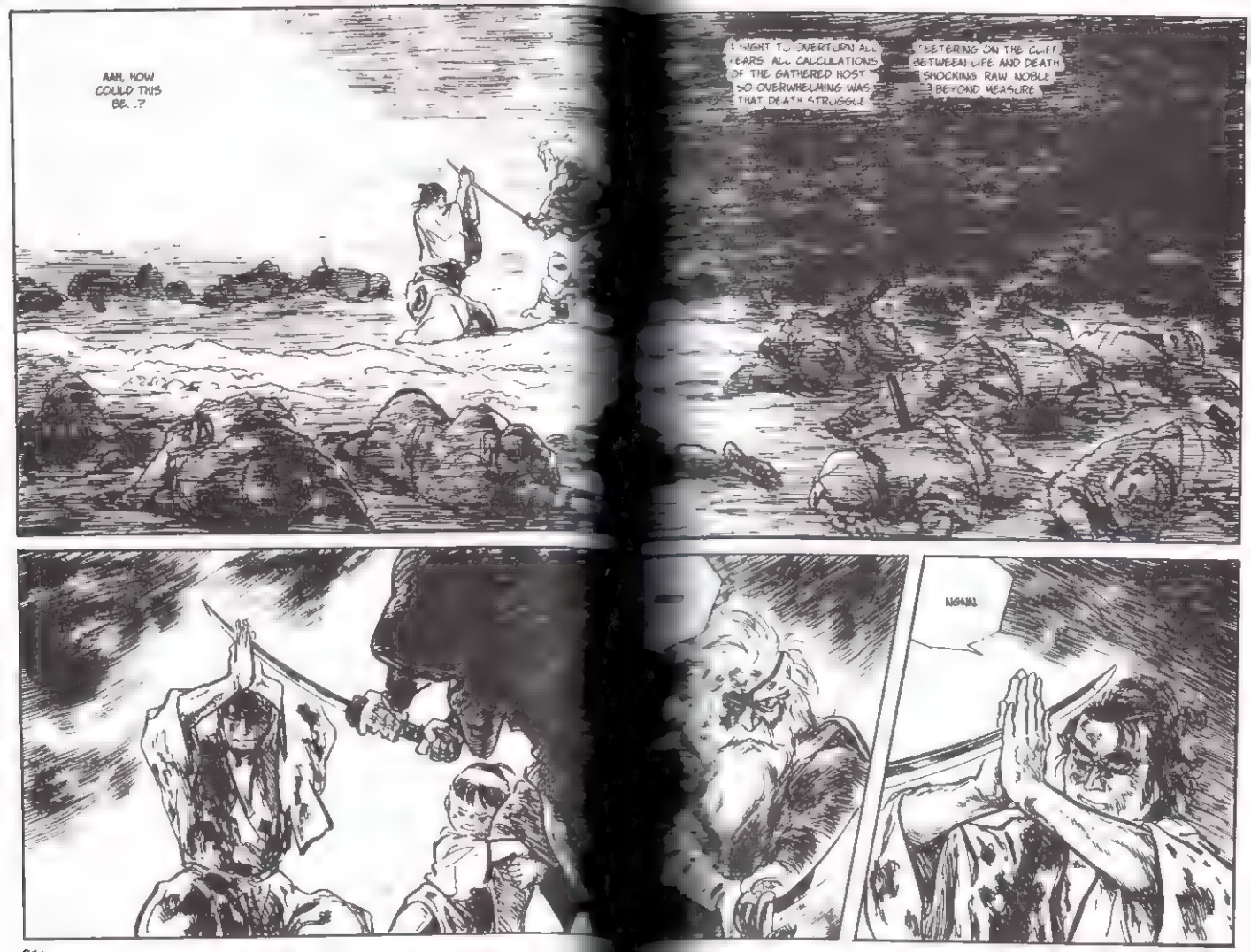
BUT NOTHING HAPPENED
NOTHING AT ALL


NOTHING AT ALL

ALL THEIR CALCULATIONS VANISHED INTO MIST THEIR GAZE RIVETED ON A SINGLE POINT NOT A COUGH NOT A SOUND

ALL THEIR CALCULATIONS VANISHED INTO MIST THEIR GAZE RIVETED ON A SINGLE POINT NOT A COUGH NOT A SOUND

AAH, HOW COULD THIS BE...?

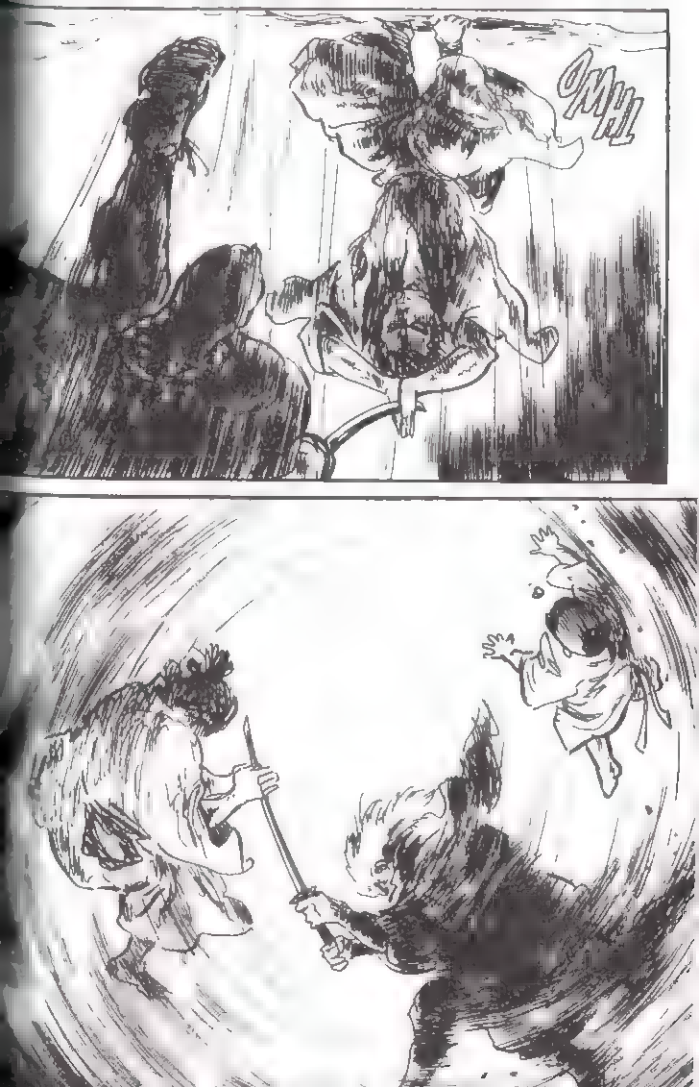

AAH, HOW COULD THIS BE..?
I MIGHT TO OVERTURN ALL YEARS ALL CALCULATIONS OF THE GATHERED HOST SO OVERWHELMING WAS THAT DEATH STRUGGLE
TETERING ON THE CLIFF BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH SHOCKING RAW NOBLE BEYOND MEASURE
NGAAL

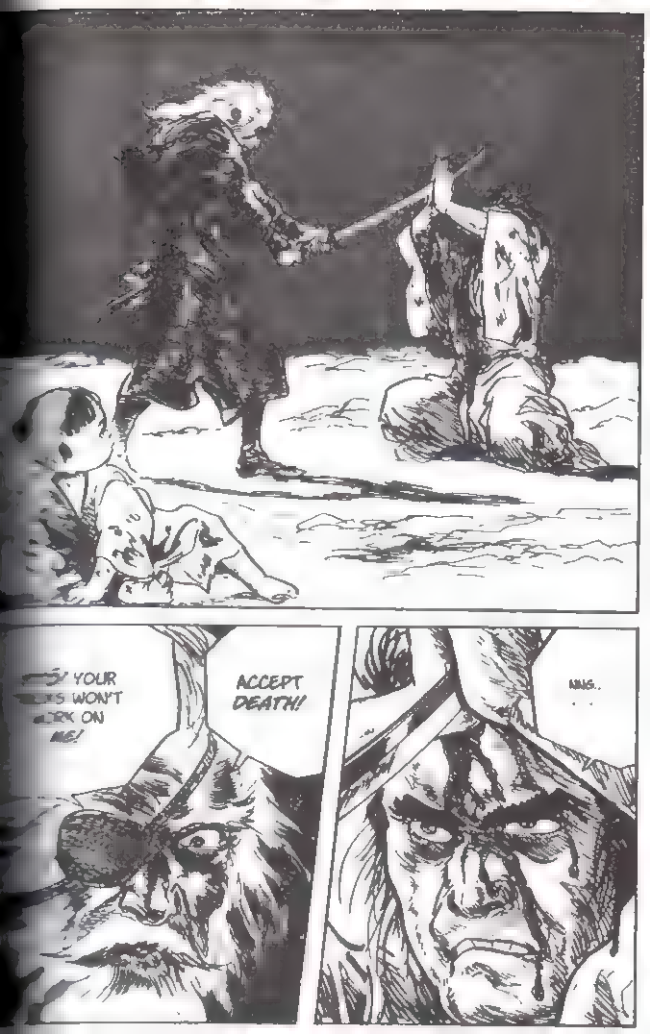
SIGHT TO OVERTURN ALL
FEARS ALL CALCULATIONS
OF THE GATHERED HOST
SO OVERWHELMING WAS
THAT DEATH STRUGGLE

TETTERING ON THE CLIFF
BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH
SHOCKING RAW NOBLE
BEYOND MEASURE

RRG!

YAAAH!
AAH?!


OMM


YOUR
WON'T
ON
ME!
ACCEPT
DEATH!
MMS..

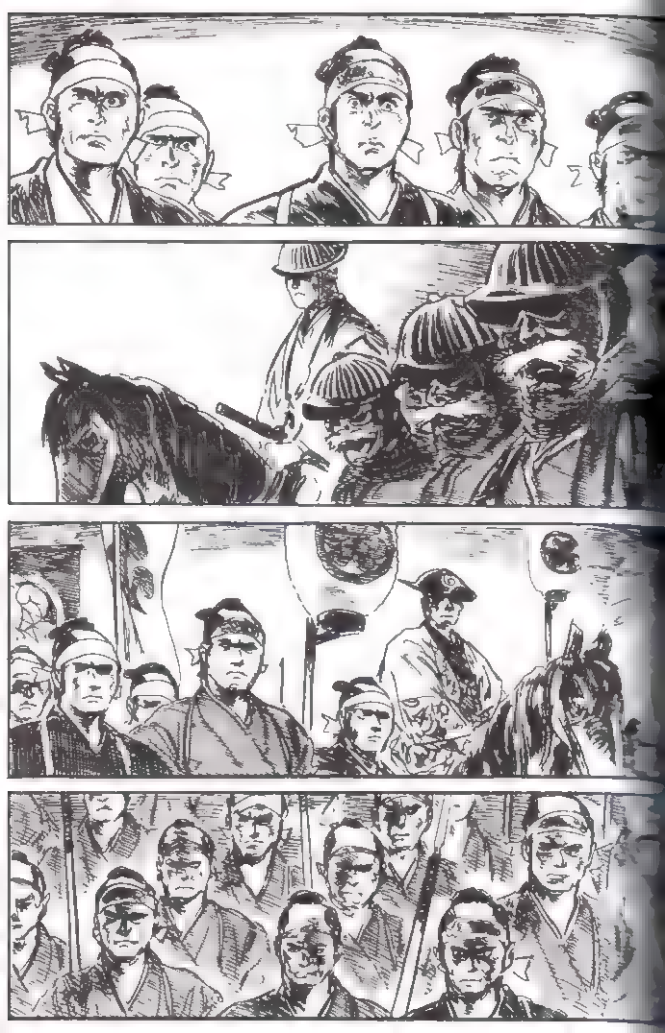
HNGN...!
RRG!!

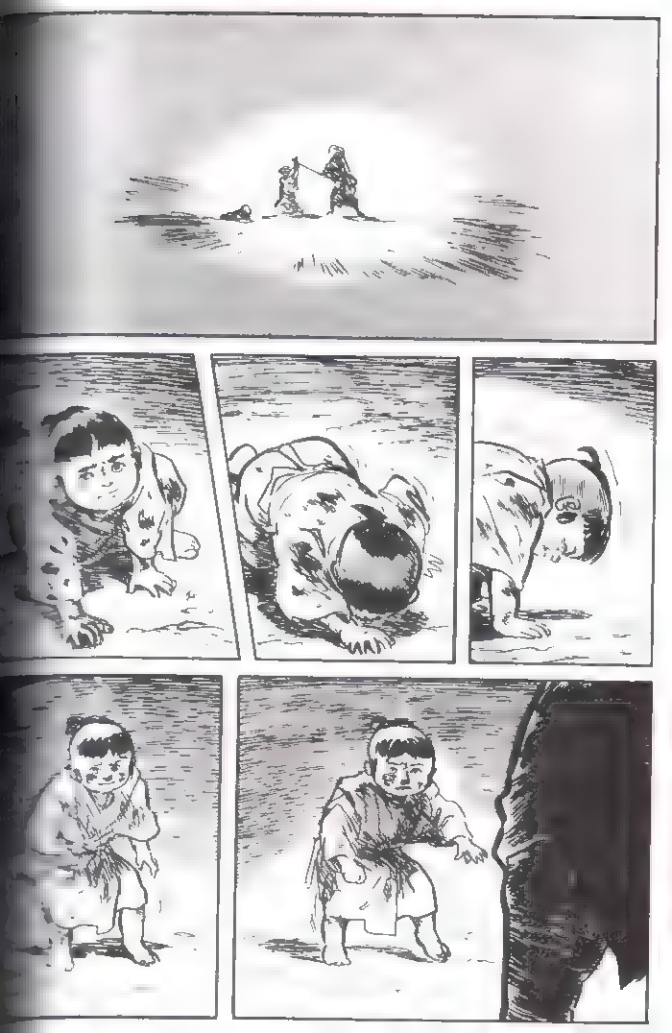
HNGN...!
RRG!!

THD

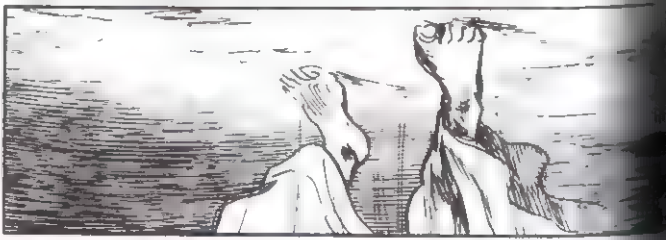
NAL.

MMS...

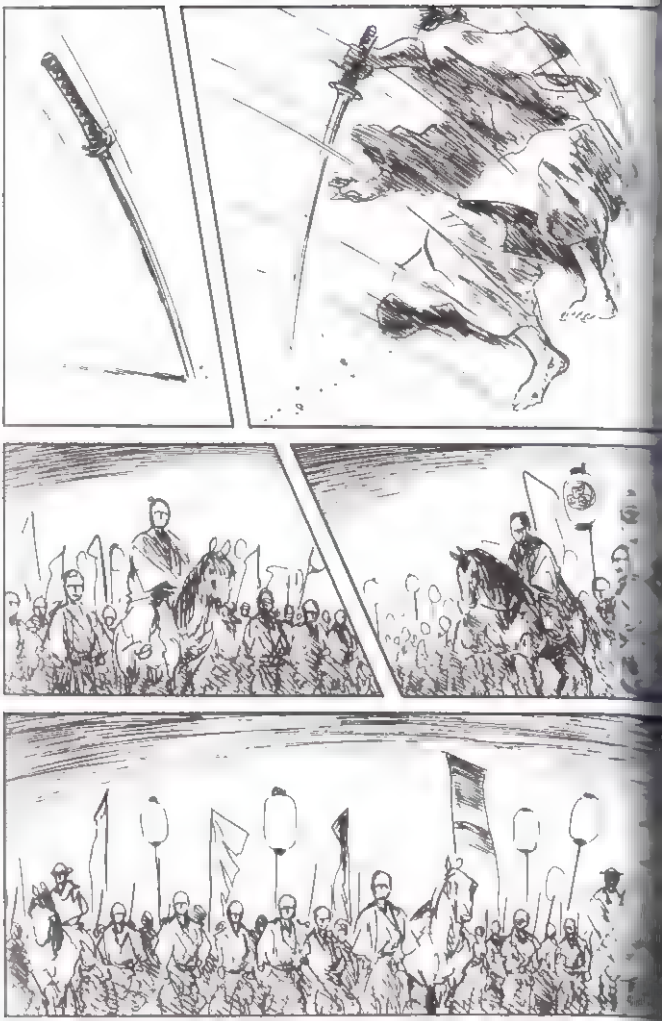




HNGAHH!
RYAAH!



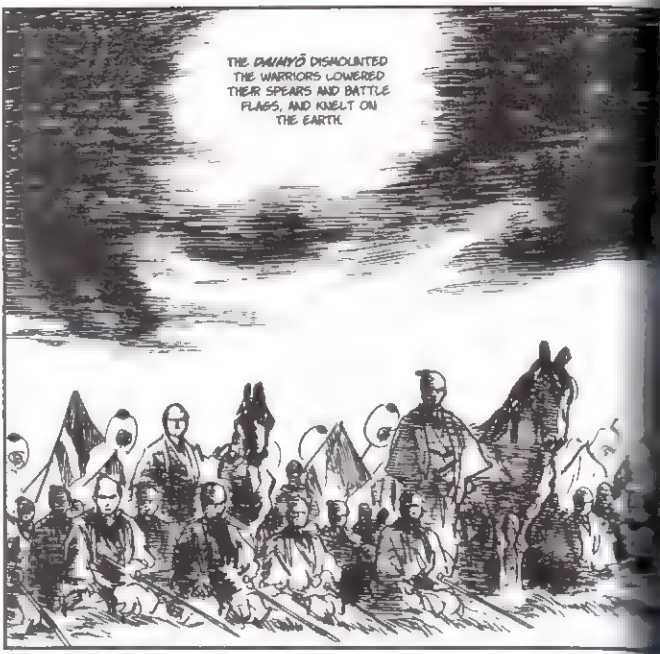
HRM.

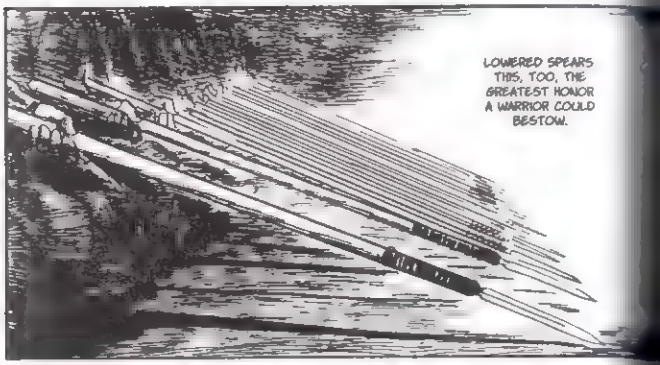


WHISSI
GHOK

THAP

EMPTY STIRRUPS. THE ULTIMATE COURTESY, THE HIGHEST SIGN OF RESPECT
AT SOME MOMENT, THE *SHŌGUN* HAD LET HIS STIRRUPS HANG HE, FOR WHOM ALL THE WARRIORS OF JAPAN SAT WITH EMPTY STIRRUPS. *SEI-I TAI-SHŌGUN*, THE "BARBARIAN-SUBDUING GENERAL" HIMSELF


THE DAIMYŌ DISMOUNTED THE WARRIORS LOWERED THEIR SPEARS AND BATTLE FLAGS, AND KNELT ON THE EARTH.

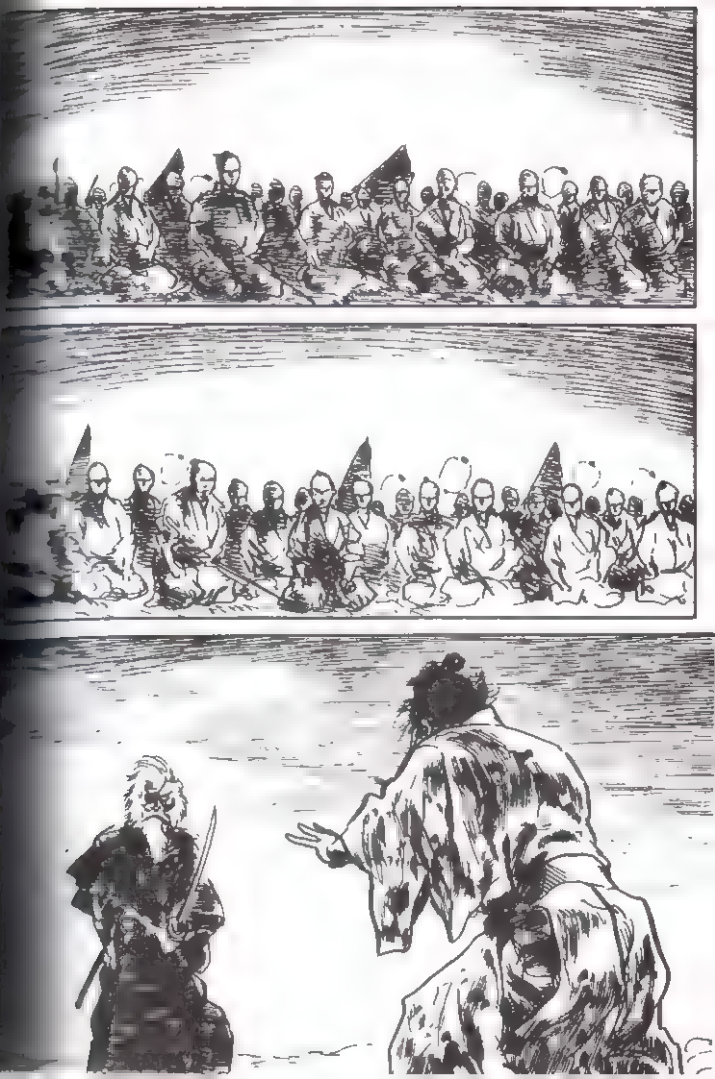

LOWERED SPEARS THIS, TOO, THE GREATEST HONOR A WARRIOR COULD BESTOW.

THEY COULD NOT DO OTHERWISE, SO AWESOME WAS THIS BATTLE TO THE DEATH.

NNG...
PAPAAA!!

ZSH!
NFF !

KHAAH!

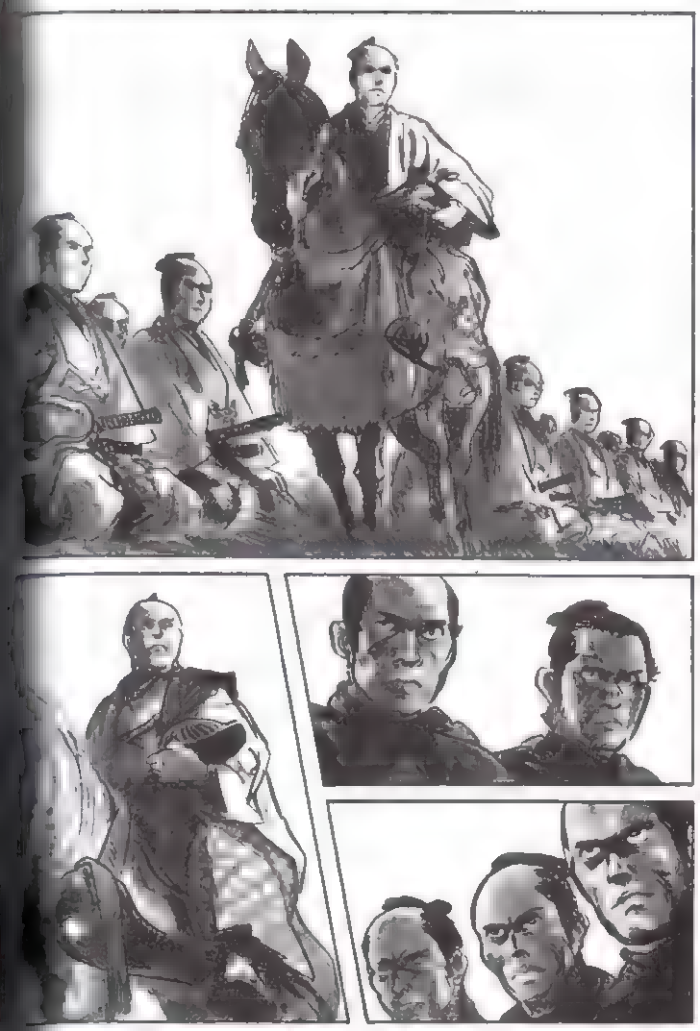


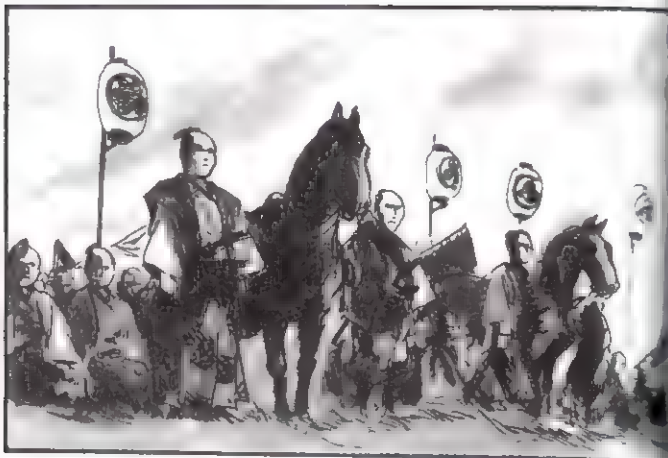
HYAH!
SPAKK
NNGG
PA.
RRUK!
NNNGG

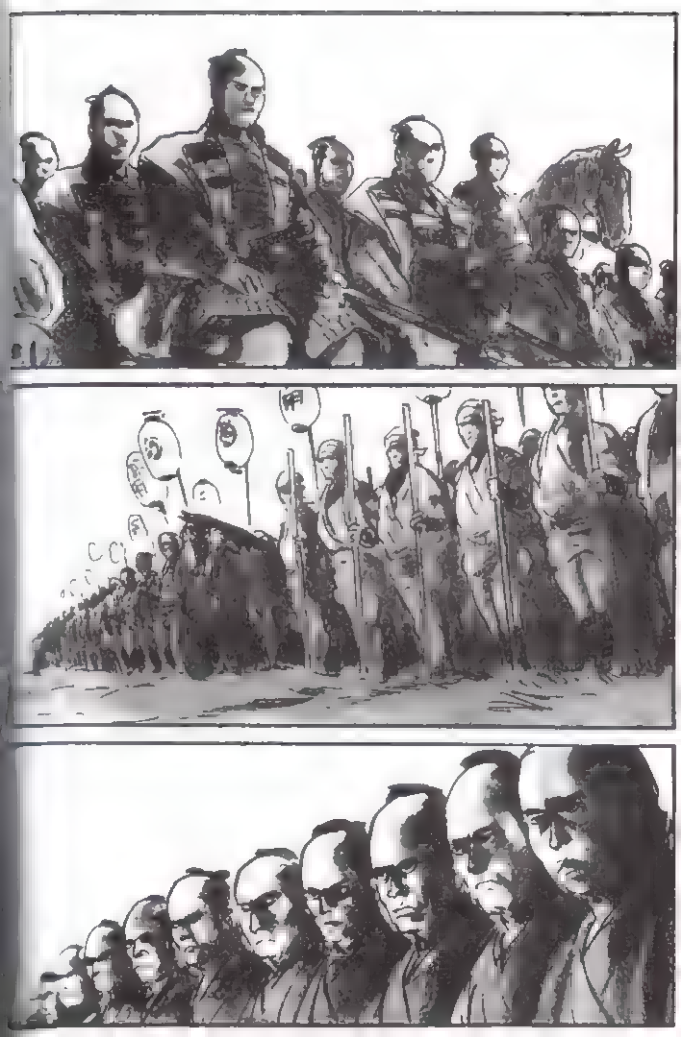
NGYAAH!

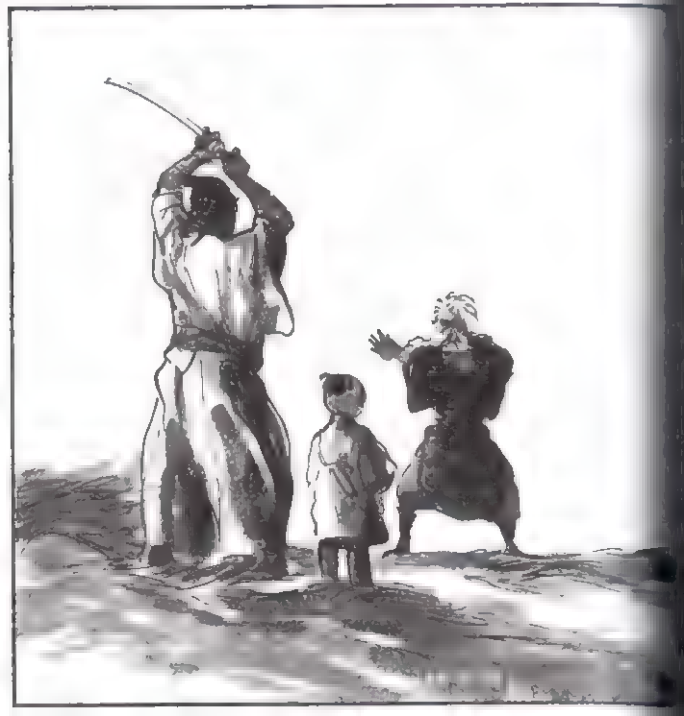
the hundred and forty-second

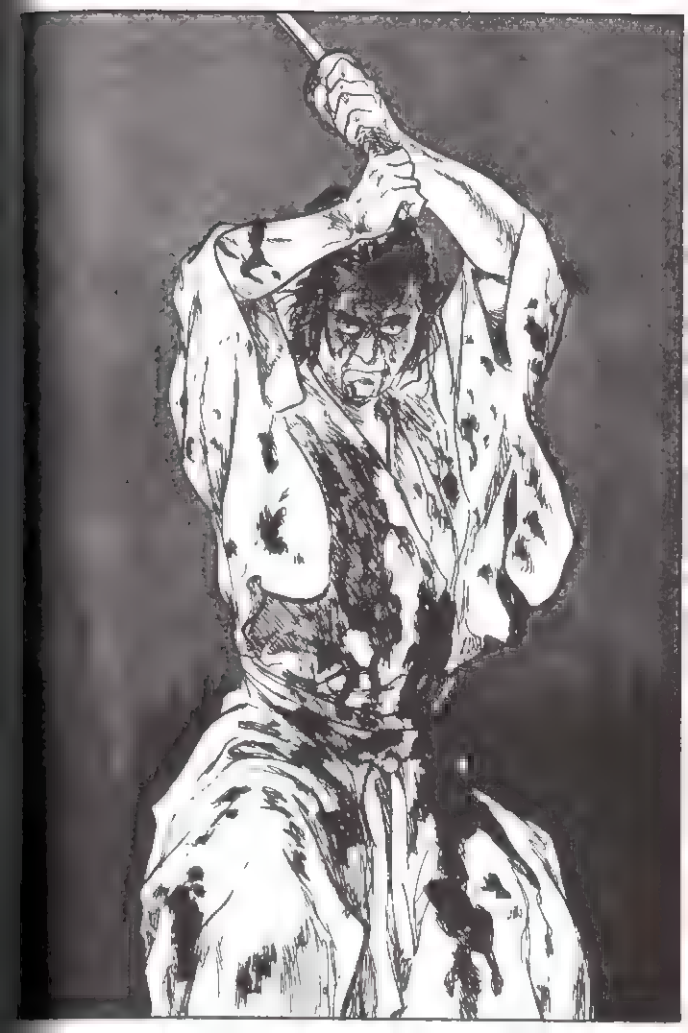
Arms

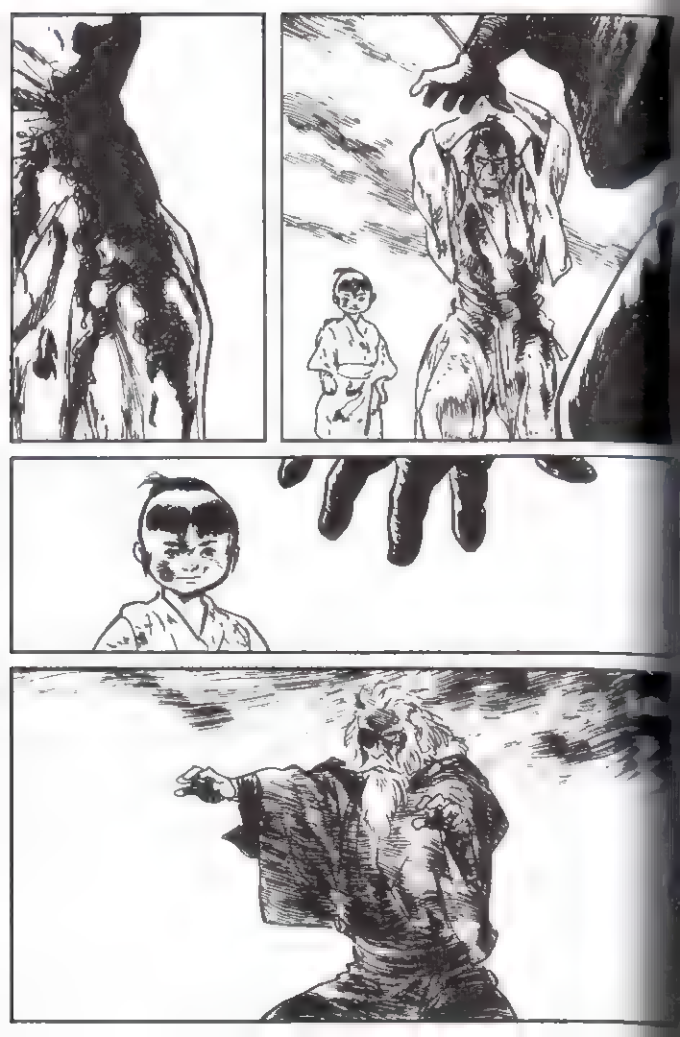






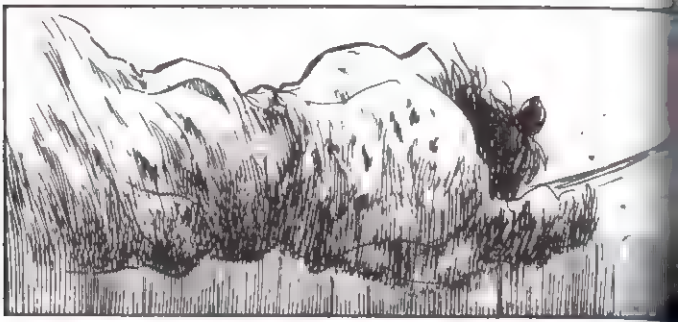


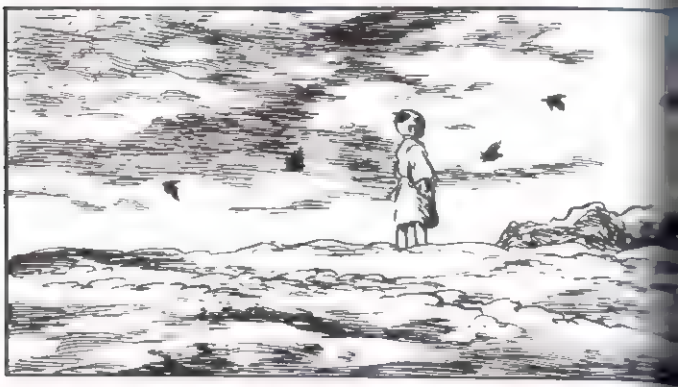


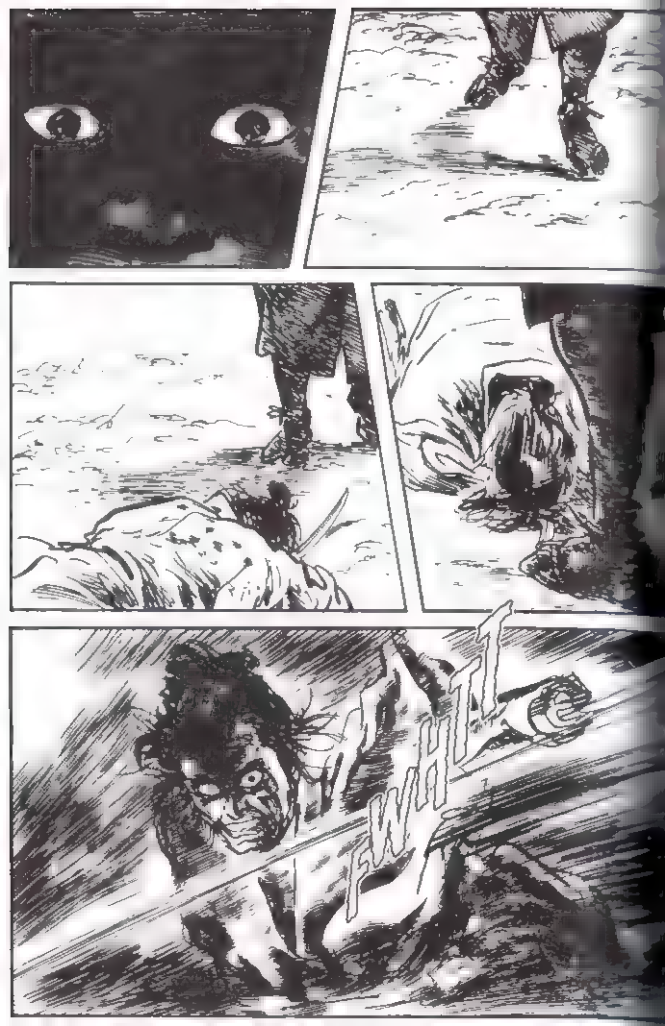


PAPAAA!

PAPAAA!






FWHIT

SKSSS

WHSSH
SLAP
SLAP
SLAP

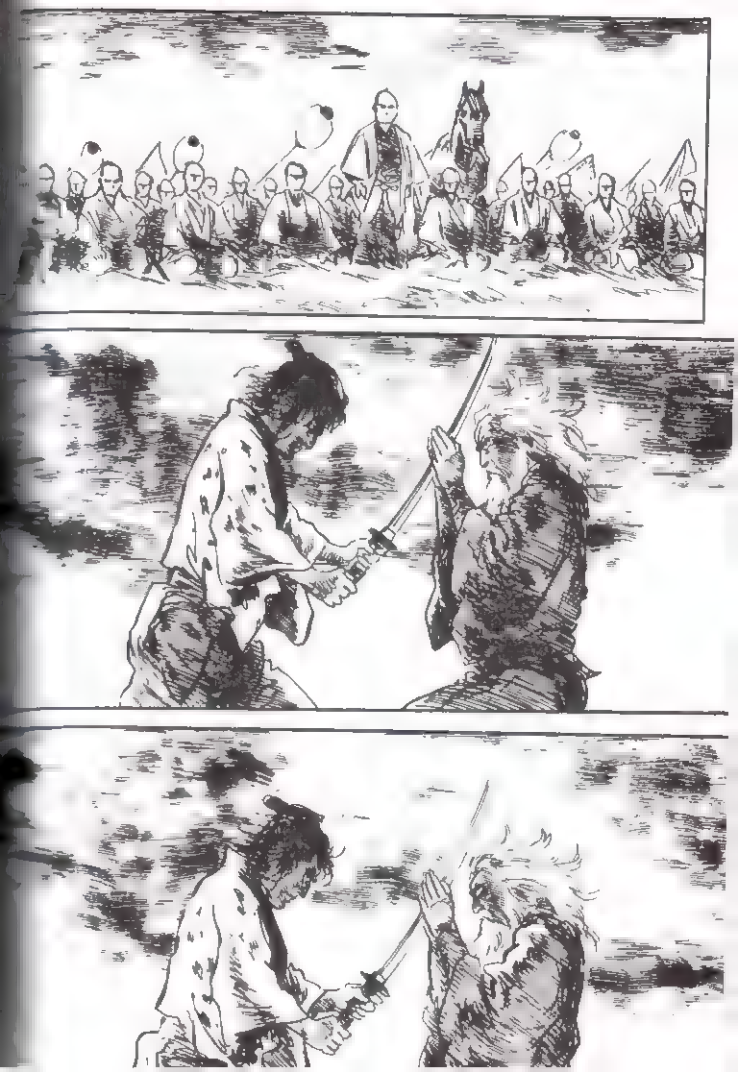
SHSSH

SKSHH
WHHT

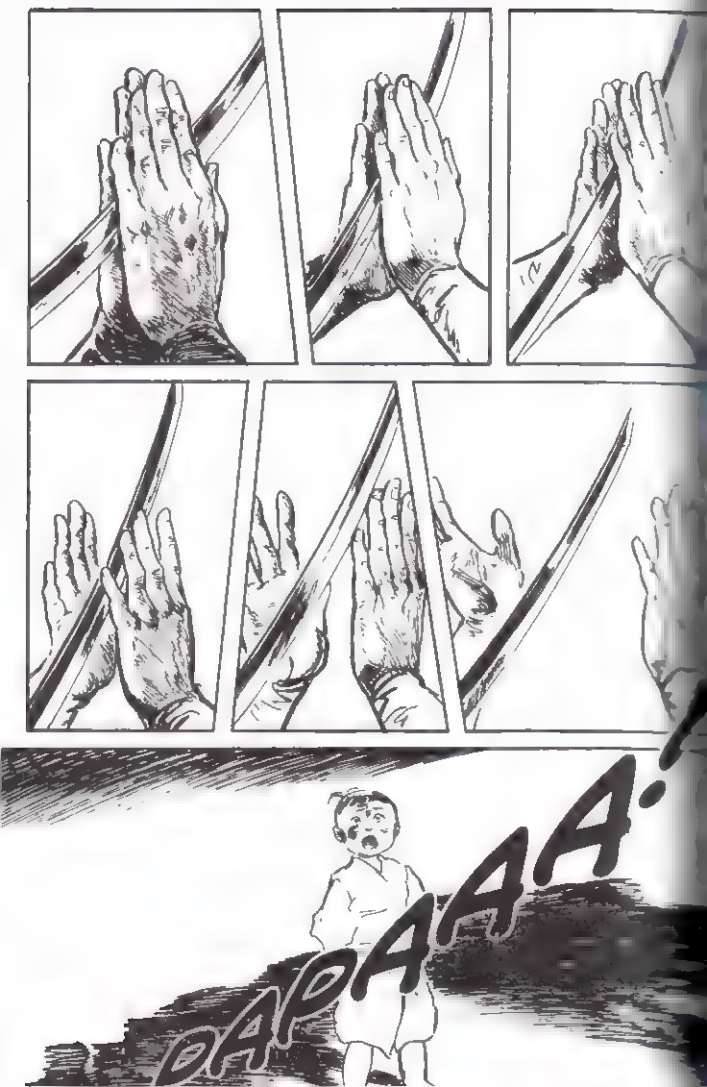
THAP

BRILLIANT ACTING..
EVEN I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD BUT DAISORO'S EYES DID NOT.
THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN YOUR DEATH
"THE WISDOM OF A CHILD," THEY SAY.
HOW IRONIC! THE GODS WANT YOUR LIFE MORE THAN MINE...
SUCH IS HEAVEN'S WILL!

RRG
....

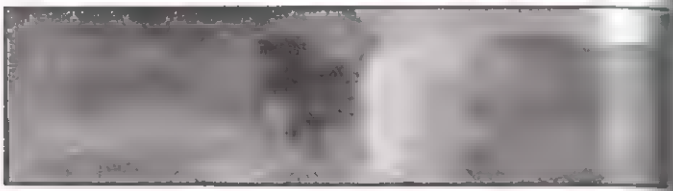


AHK.
....
....

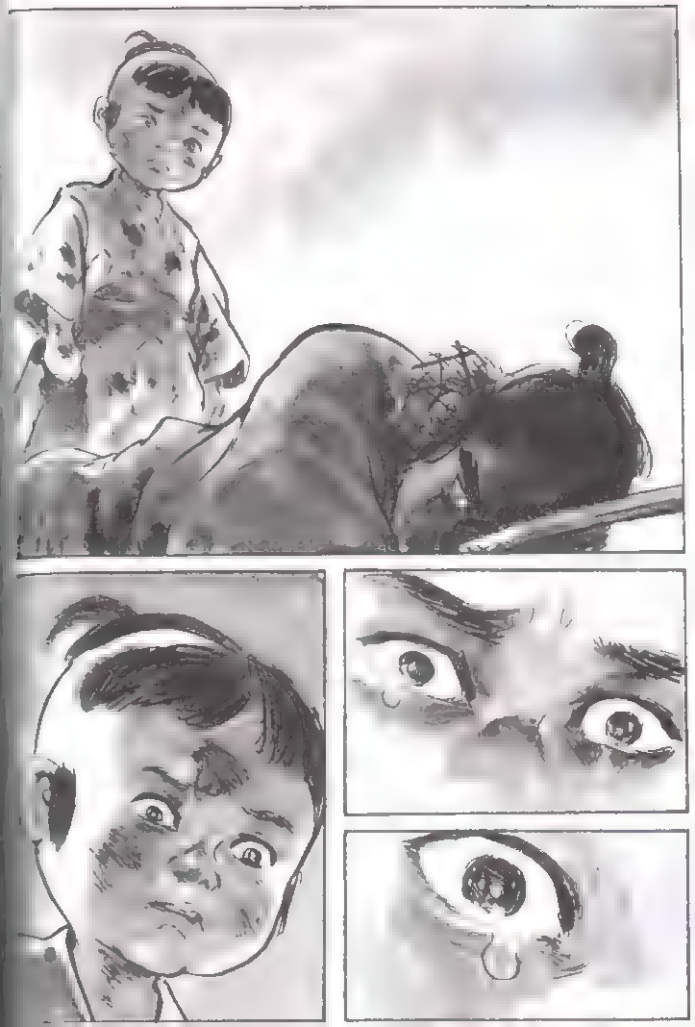

DAPAA!

UAAHHH!

AHHHHHNN!

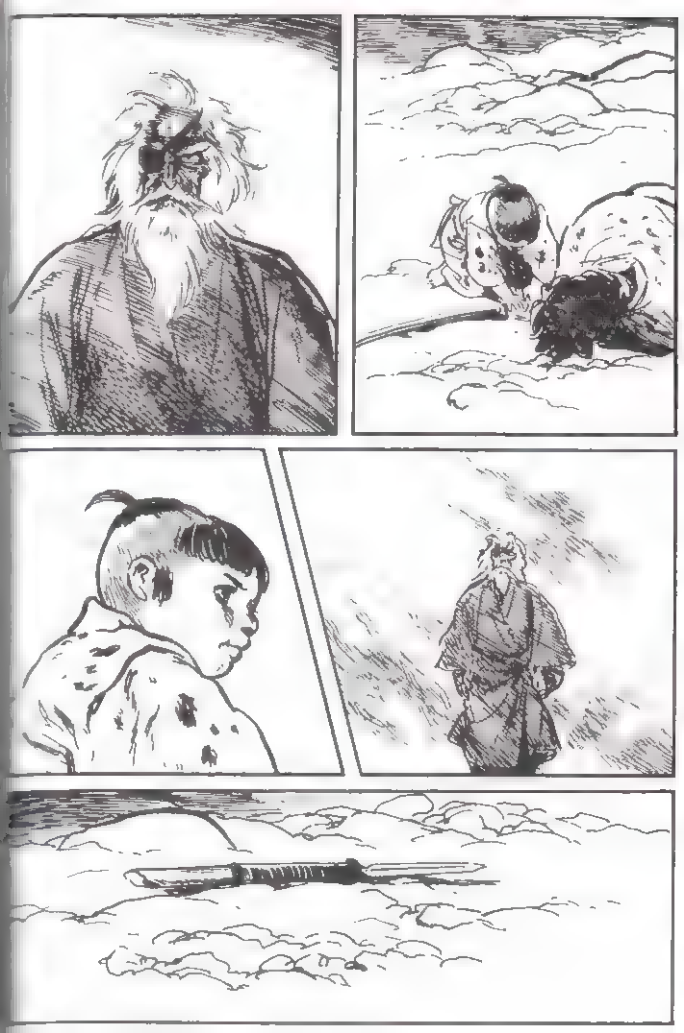


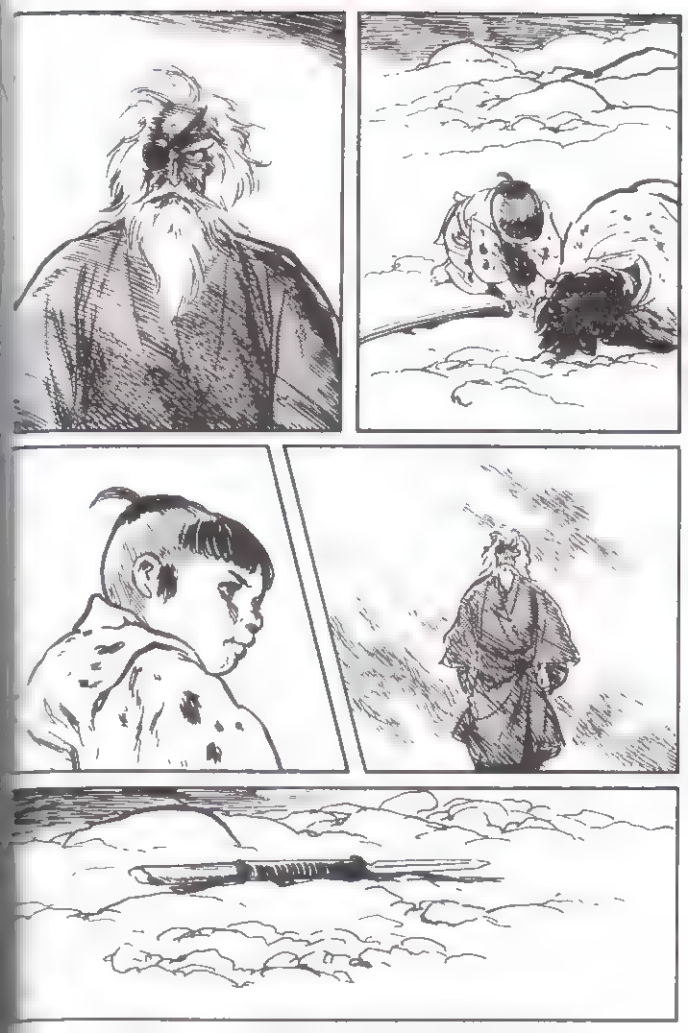
PAPAAAA!

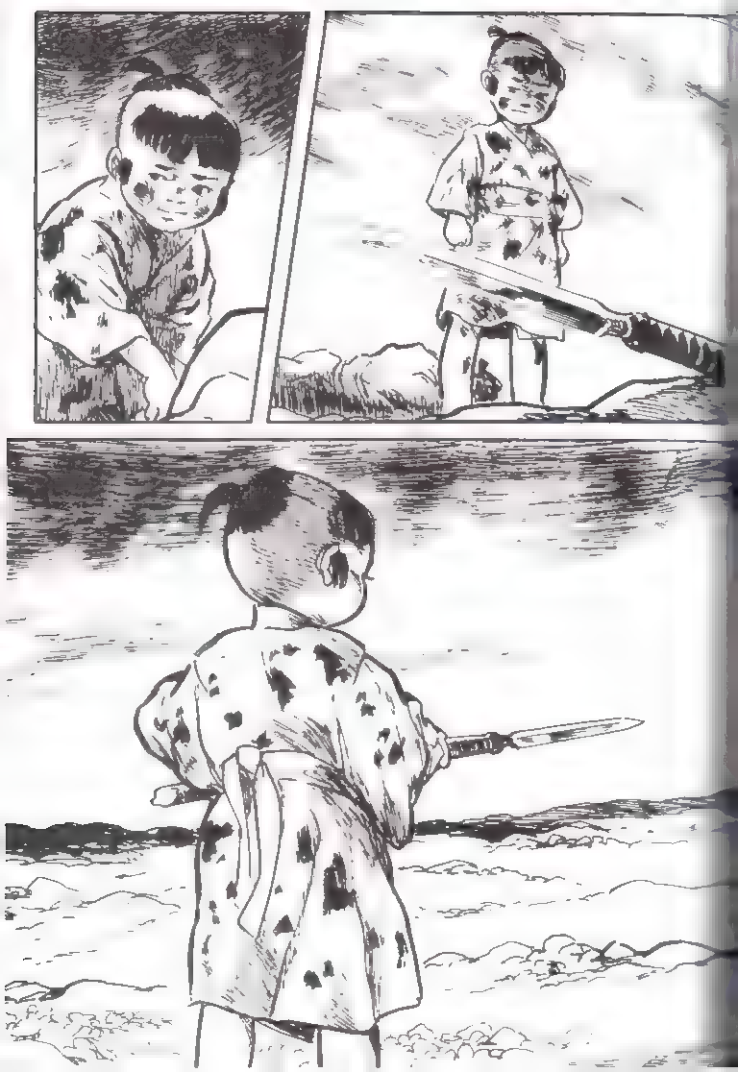


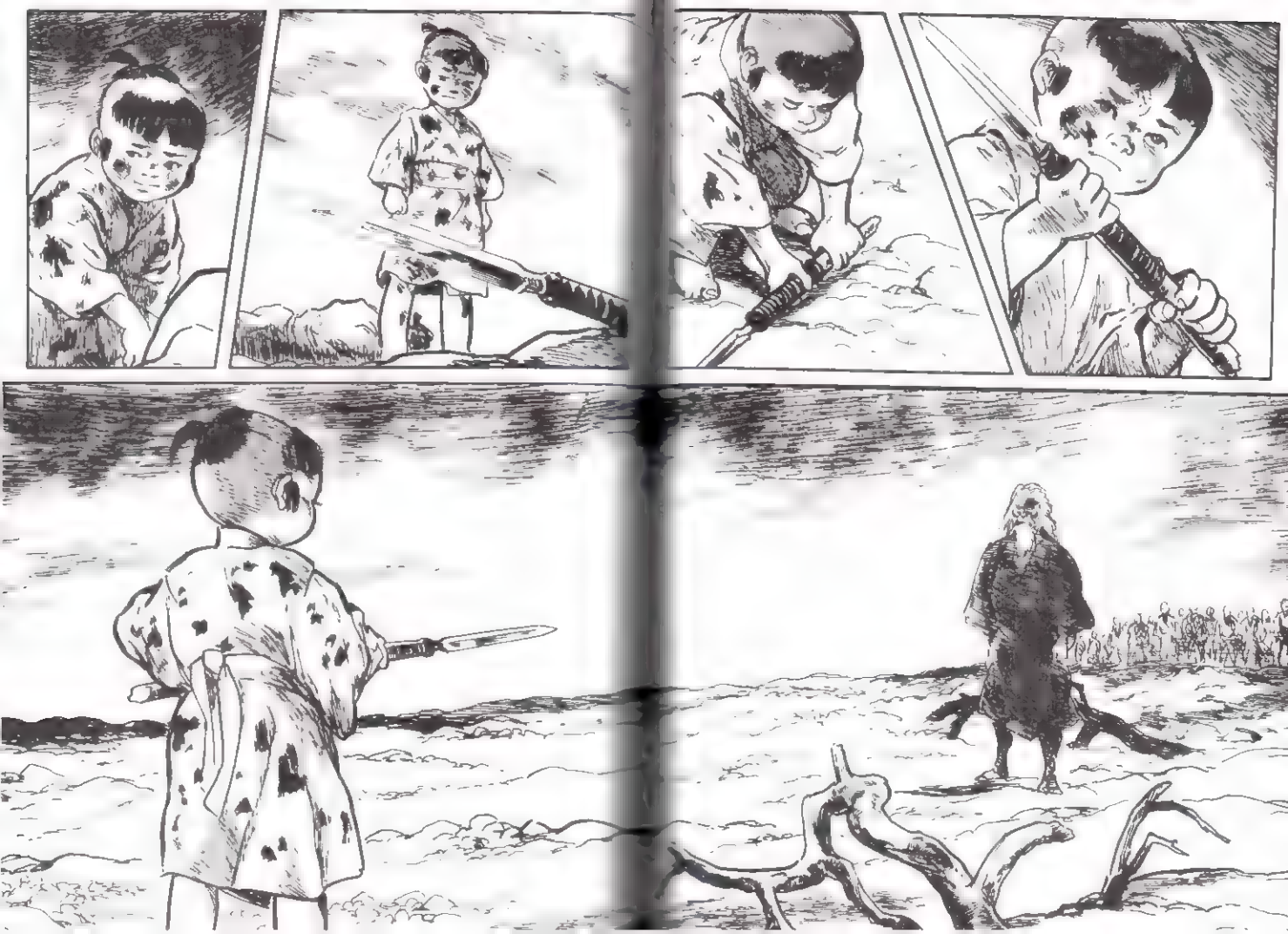
THE RIVER FLOWS INTO THE OCEAN, AND TURNS TO WAVES.
WAVES, SURGING AND RECEDING. WITHOUT END.
OUR LIVES ARE LIKE THE WAVES. WE LIVE, WE DIE, WE ARE REBORN.
SOON YOUR FATHER'S BODY WILL BE A SILENT CORPSE BUT, LIKE THE WAVES, MY LIFE WILL NOT END

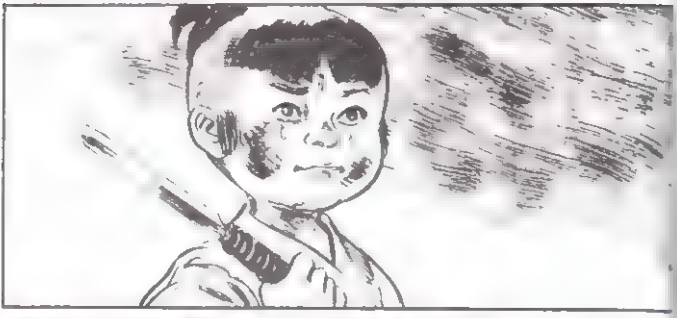
LIKE THE WAVES, YOUR FATHER WILL TRAVEL TO THE SHORE OF THE NEXT LIFE.
HIS BODY MAY DIE, BUT HIS LIFE IS ETERNAL.
YOURS, TOO, DAIGORO.





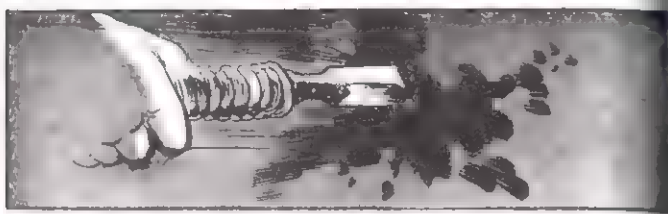


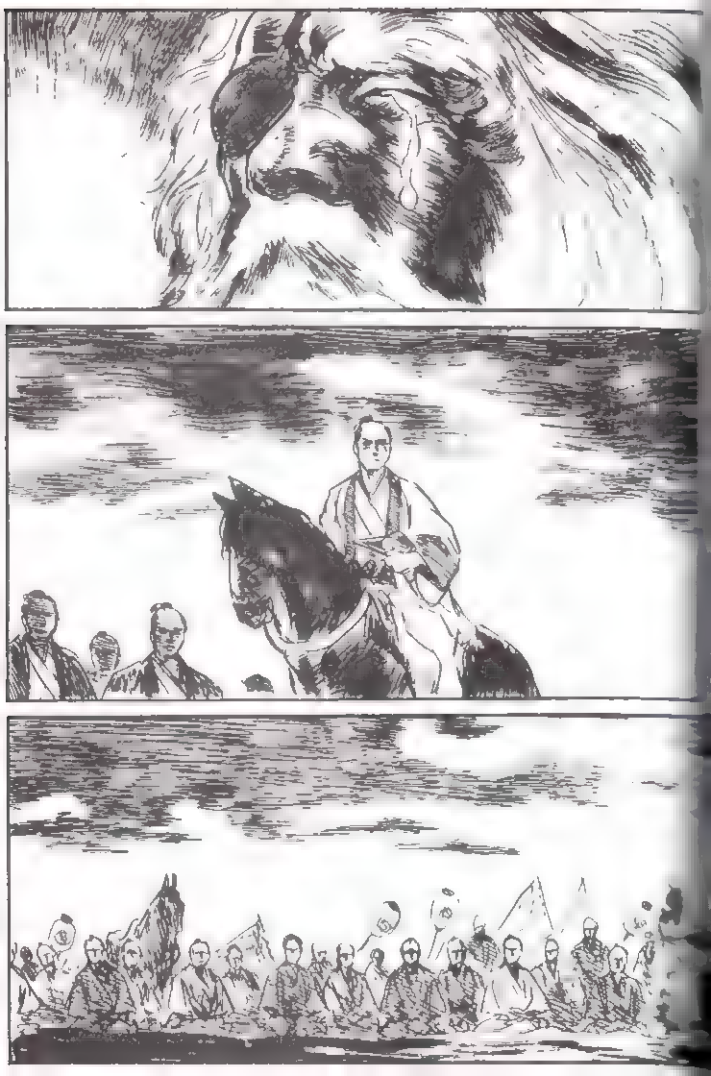


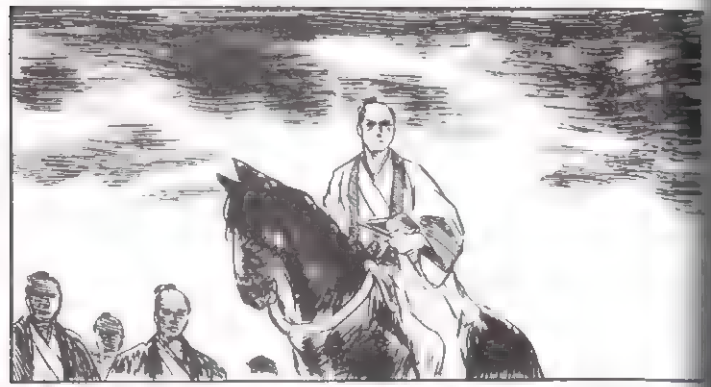


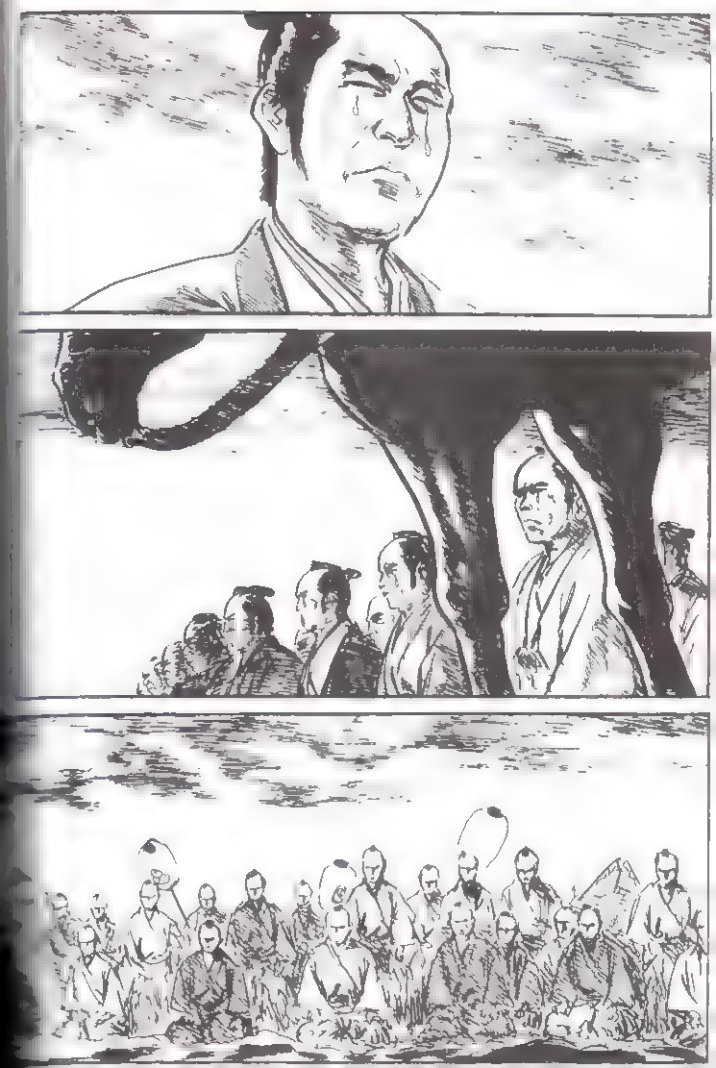
AAAAAAAAH!

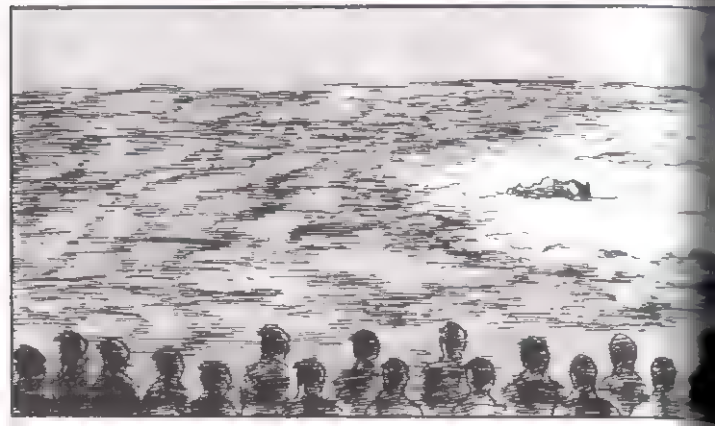
CHUNK

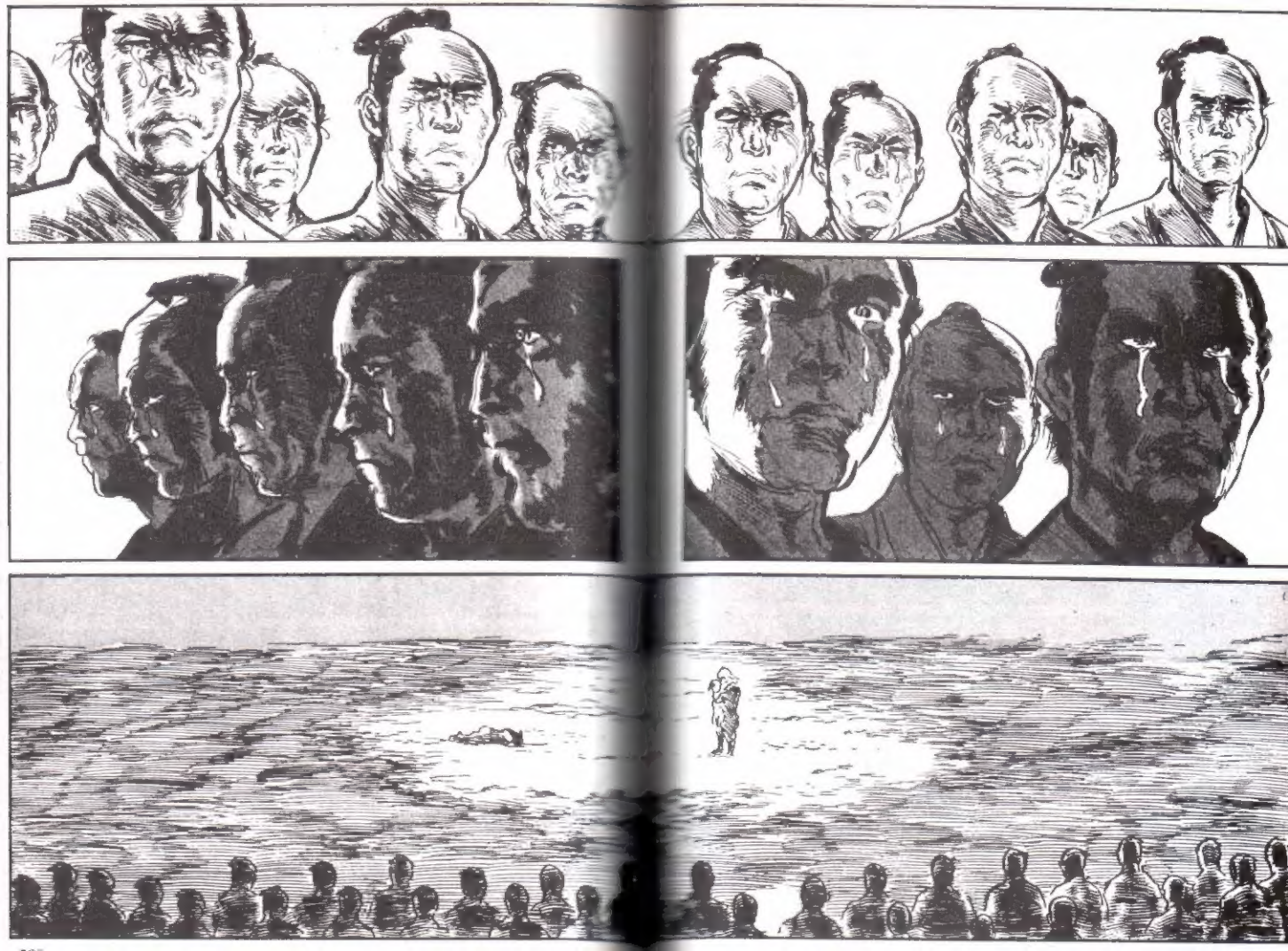


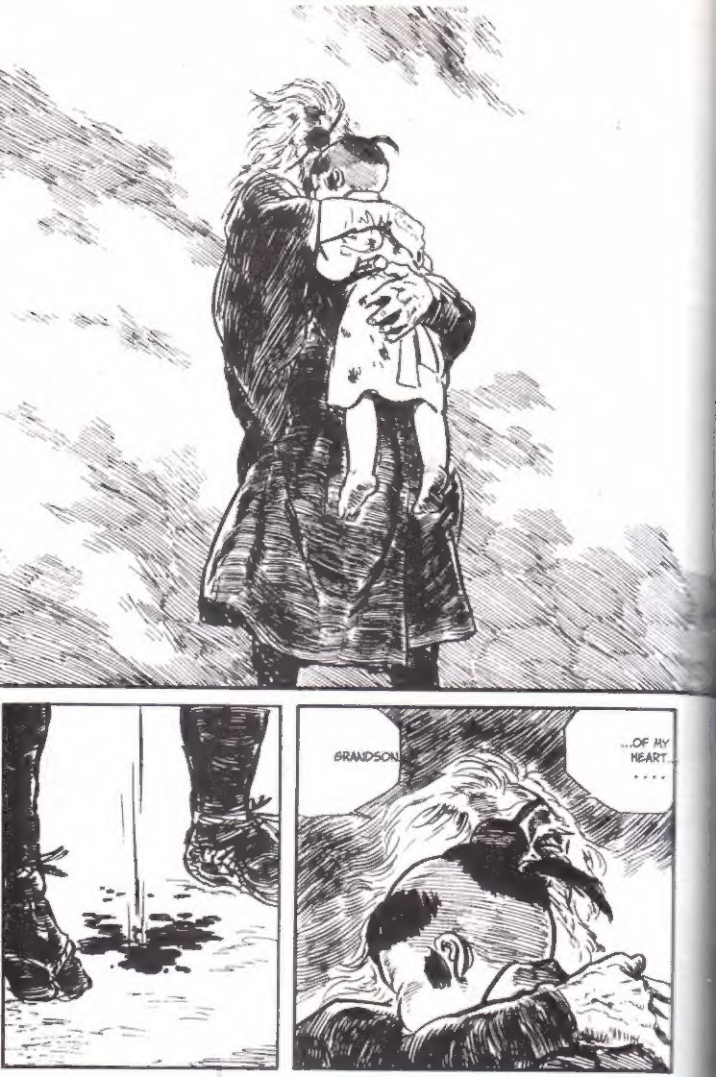











BRANDSON
...OF MY HEART....

完

The End